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new Masses

MARCH 10, 1936 15c

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By JOSEPH BARNES

IS ROME READY FOR PEACE?

By CARLO ZUCCA

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2. To work with cooperatives, other consumer groups, and trade unions in advancing the welfare of consumers.

3. To aid consumers in all matters relating to the expenditure of income.

The establishment of CONSUMERS UNION was initiated by the Association of Consumers' Research Subscribers. Originally formed to attempt a fair settlement of the strike at Consumers' Research, the Association turned its attention to a new organization when it became clear that there was no hope of bringing about its original purposes through appeal to the directors of Consumers' Research. The strike emphasized the need, which already existed, for a pro-labor consumer organization, functioning on a broad social base, democratically controlled, and serving especially the worker, the low-salaried employee, and the housewife.

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New Masses

MARCH 10, 1936

Going Up!

SEVENTY-FIVE THOUSAND elevator operators and other building service employes of New York City are on strike in about 2,000 buildings. By the time these lines reach you, the number of strikers may be 100,000.

The men are asking for union recognition and for two-dollar-a-week pay increases which would raise minimum wages to $19-27, depending on the size of the apartment house or office building. At present men are being paid as low as $13 a week. The union also asks a forty-eight hour week, although it is willing to arbitrate this demand. If granted a union shop, the strike leaders agree to sign a three year no-strike contract.

These can hardly be called extravagant demands, yet the Realty Advisory Board, the landlords' association, has refused to meet with union representatives. It brazenly provoked the strike by its insistence on maintaining intolerable working conditions and now it is hiring scabs to break the strike.

But the men are showing remarkable solidarity. All building-service workers who have been called out by the union have joined the strike. Not a single union man is scabbing. All the strike breakers are being supplied by Bergoff and other professional strike-breaking racketeers. The La Guardia administration is doing its bit for the landlords by putting on men under the guise of "emergency service," and the Hearst press carries ads for scabs.

THE NEW MASSES has just learned that Columbia University's employment bureau offers scab jobs to students.

The solidarity of the strikers is so effective, however, that even at this early writing victory appears to be a strong probability. Such a victory would have a profoundly fruitful effect upon the whole American labor movement.

"AID AND COMFORT" — *Russell T. Limbach*

The Youth Bill

AUBREY WILLIAMS, Executive Director of Roosevelt's National Youth Administration, recently said that "a vast majority of the children born in the last twenty-five years will never rise above a hand-to-mouth existence . . . all their steps from the cradle to the grave will be dogged by poverty, sickness and insecurity."

The broad and continued sweep of the American Youth Congress movement attests to the fact that youth is not ready to accept such a fate lying down.

A central factor in the fight against the distress of youth is the growing movement for passage of H.R.-10189, placed before Congress by Senator Elmer A. Benson and Representative Thomas Amlie. The proposed legislation, to be known as the American Youth Act, meets the immediate needs of the youth. It would provide young people with vocational training and regular employment on public enterprises at the "prevailing rate of wages for the work performed as established by the recognized organizations of labor in each community." Needy high school and vocational school students would receive aid sufficient to cover their living expenses and school fees. A system of regular, all-year-round employment on academic projects would be established as an aid to graduate and undergraduate college students.

Unlike the bureaucratic set-up of the New Deal's National Youth Administration, the carrying out of the new act would be controlled by youth commissions. In all administrative boards, there would be represented youth organizations and trade unions as well as

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local social service, educational and consumers' organizations. Public hearings on the bill will be held in Washington on March 19 to 21, inclusive.

Arthur Ewart

UNLESS public opinion is brought to bear on the Brazilian government, Arthur Ewart, former Communist Reichstag deputy, will be deported from Rio de Janeiro to Naziland. He is a victim of the Vargas government's desire to camouflage the widespread unrest of the Brazilian people as no more than a "foreigners' plot." Ewart, a political exile, has been an outstanding foe of fascism and his fate at the hands of the Gestapo may easily be surmised. Our readers should write or wire to the Brazilian Ambassador in Washington urging that Ewart be permitted to leave Brazil at once to a country of his own choice.

Such popular protests have helped to save the life of Ernst Thaelmann, imprisoned in a Nazi dungeon for the past three years. Readers should observe the anniversary of his arrest—March 3—by demanding from the German embassy the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners in Germany.

Who Will Pay?

AS A shrewd politician, President Roosevelt knows that the worst time to impose new taxes is during an election campaign. But he has been making one concession after another to the most reactionary wing of the class he represents. And now, as if to celebrate the third birthday of the New Deal, a budget hole of $1,137,000,000 is about to be filled through taxation.

The President has asked for $620,000,000 in extra revenue to be produced during the current year to adjust the budget by covering payments to farmers and veterans. These payments, not provided for in the budget presented on January 6, were made necessary by the Supreme Court's destruction of the A.A.A. and the passing of the bonus bill over his veto.

The President, with his eye on November, proposes taxing undistributed corporation profits. The question is: will Congress approve it, and will it prevent the tax from being passed on to the consumer? There still exists the danger that Congress may resort to income tax revisions at the expense of lower incomes, or a general manufacturers' sales tax to be paid in the long run by the consumer.

Between 1934 and 1935, industrial production rose 14 percent, while profits rose 40 percent, and in some industries even over 100 percent. Between the end of 1934 and the end of 1935, stock prices rose 38.9 percent. But in 1935 the mass of the American people consumed 6 percent less food than in the previous year.

It is perfectly obvious that it is not the masses who can afford to bear the additional tax burdens. If the budget is to be readjusted, let it be done at the cost of the big corporations and the men with accumulated fortunes, by those who continue to make huge profits while misery spreads across America.

Tampa's Murders

IT IS some time since the violence of Klan rule has replaced citrus groves and tropical surf in the list of Florida's claims to renown. But the events surrounding the flogging and murder of Joseph Shoemaker, Socialist organizer of the unemployed workers, continue to reveal in a startling manner the extent of the Klan's activities and particularly its tie-up with local government.

On Saturday, February 29, Police Sergeant Carl Tompkins was found dead outside the Tampa City Hospital. Tompkins had been on desk duty the night Shoemaker was lynched; later he had given testimony which had compromised former Police Chief Tittsworth and ten other policemen and Klansmen accused of Shoemaker's death. Now the report is being circulated that Tompkins "leaped" to his death from a third-story window of the hospital.

This account might sound credible but for the fact that only a month ago Robert Fariss, a Tampa businessman and formerly close to Tittsworth, was found dead in his automobile. Fariss' death was also described as "suicide." Of Fariss, too, it had been said that "he knew too much" about the Klan's affairs and the killing of Joseph Shoemaker. There is reason to believe that Shoemaker's murderers have deliberately put out of the way two important witnesses against them.

It is also apparent that Governor Dave Sholtz and the employers' associations of Florida are intent upon suppressing the investigation into the lynching of Shoemaker. Only widespread public protest can prevent a complete official whitewashing of the murderers. The least the American Federation of Labor can do is not to hold its convention in Bloody Tampa.

Browder's Broadcast

THE willingness of the Columbia Broadcasting Company to permit Earl Browder, General Secretary of the Communist Party, to speak on the night of March 5 over a nationwide hookup, is no proof that the radio trust likes either Communism or free speech. Most probably, the Columbia officials were actuated by two motives. They are anxious to counteract Republican charges that the radio is partial to New Deal propagandists. And, more important still, they are against public ownership and control of the radio and want to be able to tell a Congressional investigating committee and the world in general that private ownership permits the greatest freedom of speech.

More important now is the frantic attempt to silence Browder.

The campaign to halt Browder's broadcast is one more proof that the menace to democratic rights comes from the tories. The appeal to the Ford Motor Company, an important factor in the Columbia system, to stop Browder from speaking came from the reactionary patent attorney John P. Davis, of Munn and Company. As was to be expected, the squeak of Mr. Davis was followed by the roar of Mr. Hearst, who, as America's Goebbels, would like to monopolize the radio for fascism.

The radio trust may have its own good reasons for scheduling the broadcast, but these are no guarantees of freedom of speech over the most important of modern speaking mediums. Those who realize the importance of civil rights ought to make every effort to open the radio wide for progressive ideas.

In the long run, America has more to learn and to gain from the truths which Earl Browder has to tell than from soap ads, Major Bowes and the lies of the Liberty League.

The Tokio Revolt

WITH true Nipponese delicacy, the press of Japan refers to the murder of high government officials by troops under the command of military fascists as "the Wednesday morning events." These events are bound to have a deep effect not only upon Japan but upon the whole world.

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Within the empire, the affair reveals more fully the menace of fascism to millions of Japanese to whom, despite obvious portents, fascism had appeared remote. As one Japanese intellectual put it, the menace was only a "ghost fascism." Throughout the world, the "Wednesday morning events" emphasize the sharpness of the war peril, the reality of the "great war" against the Soviet Union for which the Japanese militarists have long been preparing with the aid of certain American exporters and bankers.

The Soviet Union has often been accused of entertaining "empty fears." It has been argued that Japan is too weak to attack, or that some allegedly liberal premier like Okada would prevent war. Such arguments ignored the fact that Okada and his political group have yielded to the army again and again. Okada himself has definitely declared for imperialist expansion in Asia. His threats of an armed attack upon the Soviet Union have been quite open. He has repeatedly rejected Soviet offers for a non-aggression pact.

Okada and Takahashi represent the civilian wing of the reactionary ruling class which considers it advisable to proceed more cautiously in carrying out its war aims. Okada's group won in the popular elections. Furthermore, the fascist parties lost seats in the Diet while the Shakai Taishu-to (Social Masses Party) gained a number of seats. But the Tokio mutiny upset the results of the parliamentary elections and it must now be evident even to the most skeptical that the Soviet Union's "empty fears" have been well-founded.

For the mutiny was not the mere outburst of a few hot-headed soldiers and subalterns. Behind these lurk important and highly-placed figures, men like General Araki, Baron Hiranuma, General Minami, General Ugaki and other fascist intriguers of the Black Dragon Society. And behind them stand the all-powerful leaders of Japanese finance capital.

NOW the mutiny has been halted, order has been restored and even the "murdered" premier turns up alive. All is again as it was. Only the Emperor, sacred descendant of the Sun Goddess, will now most probably ignore the popular vote in the elections. He most likely will appoint to power the very army fascists and war mongers against whom the people voted.

During the election campaign, the War Office, legally prohibited from interfering in politics, distributed three million pamphlets urging the people to vote for those who reject the theory that the Emperor is the organ of the constitution. It demanded the election of those who understand "the real meaning of national defense." Instead, the people voted against the War Office and the military and civil fascists. Now the Emperor comes to the rescue of these sinister forces. This will help to awaken millions of Japanese to the fact that the Emperor stands in the way of the democratic struggle for rice, land and freedom.

The proletariat of Japan has only recently begun moving toward trade union unity. Great advances in this direction have been made among the 7 percent of the five million workers who are already organized in trade unions. Their slogan is: "Against fascism!"

This movement is being facilitated by the acute economic crisis. The workers in the towns are starving as a result of "social dumping," or export dumping at the expense of working-class vitality. And the workers are being supported increasingly by the vast mass of starving peasants who exist on leaves and grass.

IN THE west, it is generally supposed that the Japanese people are hungry because the islands are "overpopulated." The fact is, Japan has a huge rice "surplus," and the government resorts to the plowing under and other methods for curtailing production. The argument of Japanese "overpopulation" is employed by the bankers, landlords and generals to "justify" the looting of China and feverish preparations for an offensive against the Soviet Union.

Popular discontent is so great that it was expressed even in the sanguinary "Wednesday morning events." The soldiers and lower officers are dupes of big business and the high military fascists; they are thrice dupes of the Emperor, who links feudalism with finance capitalism. The legitimate discontent of the lower army ranks is diverted by fascism from its original course. Nevertheless, even the "Wednesday morning events" echoed the anger of the people against the rulers responsible for their misery. The privates and lower officers have been misled into forms of action which threaten the Japanese people with fascism and war; when they awaken to realities, however, they will find the true road to freedom. The essential danger lies not in them, nor in the Japanese people from whom they spring, but in the fascists and war-mongers who oppress them.

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Is Tokio Ready for Fascism?

The Background of the Military Revolt

JOSEPH BARNES

THE comic opera denouement of the most recent incident in the struggle of Japan's military fascists to consolidate their control over the government in Tokio has already taken its place with cherry blossoms, hari-kiri and the tea ceremony, stock properties of those who preserve the illusion that the Japanese are men of a different planet motivated by traditions and customs which are not to be understood by foreigners.

But the spectacle of a Prime Minister hiding for two days in his maid's room while rebel soldiers stood guard over the murdered body of his brother-in-law, who had run out into the early morning snowstorm to save the family's honor, somehow overflows even the capacious formula of *bushido,* the spirit of Japan's feudal samurai, so often used to explain away what other peoples have learned to call imperialist aggression or simply private thuggery.

For in spite of the inadequacy of the news reports, it has already become clear that the latest outbreak of the military rash in Japan is not too occult for diagnosis, although the list of its victims who really were dead under their blanket of snow indicates that its cure may be slow and painful. Censorship and the difficulties of the Japanese language have given both the rebels and their victims the speech and gestures in American newspapers of characters from *The Mikado.* But bankrupt farmers, battleships, munitions factories and compound interest at 6 percent are realities in any language.

It is these realities, with their overtones of war and social revolution, which explain the pattern in which the attempted coup d'état took place. The pattern itself is not peculiar to Japan. Wherever monopoly capitalism, entrenched against depression, revolt and the other consequences of its own fatal contradictions, begins to substitute for parliamentary democracy a more naked use of force, through mass hypnosis of the petty bourgeois classes in a fascist movement, substantially the same results have followed.

The incidents of the blood bath which followed a national election considered damaging to the army's power in domestic politics in Japan are as romantic and as unimportant as the mists which shrouded Mount Fuji on the morning of the assassinations. But there are three aspects in which peculiarly Japanese conditions have made the development of fascism significantly different from Western experience. The first is the position of the Emperor, Hirohito; the second is the peculiar role of the army in Japanese life; the third is the predominantly liberal and democratic nature of the threat to monopoly capital which has called forth this newest answer.

The Emperor, besides being a diligent student of black beetles, is notable in Japanese life as the head of the family which outranks even the Mitsuis and Mitsubishis (Iwasaki) in its industrial and banking wealth. No estimate has ever been made of the Imperial Household's fortune. It is commonly assumed to be greater than that of the Mitsui family, which handles about one-half of Japan's total export trade.

At the same time, Hirohito is himself a substantial landowner. As the Emperor, who is also God, he is the special representative of the feudal landowners who ruled Japan until 1868. In himself he represents the merger between finance capital and a landholding aristocracy which still exacts 50 percent of the rice harvest of Japanese farmers as its rent. A similar alliance existed between the East Prussian Junkers and the industrialists of the Rhine valley before Hitler was called on to buttress their respective positions. But in no country of Western Europe has the landlord class survived with the same relative weight in such an alliance as in Japan.

Karl Radek has written that this factor gives Japanese fascism "a powerful fist on flabby muscles." But it explains the predominantly rural and agrarian nature of the discontent arising in Japan from the increasing bankruptcy of the small farmer class, still numbering more than half the population. High taxation, usury, crushing rents and typhoons have steadily depressed the Japanese farmer. He has gained nothing from the industrial boom built on armament expansion in recent years. The dream of Manchurian colonization has gone glimmering in the four cold winters since the empty plains were first offered as an answer to the growing overpopulation trying to make its living on the rice paddies of Japan.

The young army officers, for whom Japanese school children will shortly write letters to the judge in blood drawn from their own veins, are recruited largely from this class. The constitution of Japan, like its cultural traditions, gives them a power and an authority unknown in western countries since the first burghers in some Hanseatic town felt themselves strong enough as a class to defy their freebooting soldier knights. In its famous pamphlet issued in the autumn of 1934, the War Ministry itself announced a national program of "collectivist" economics, reading like the early treatises of Alfred Rosenberg or Otto Strasser, which showed the deep current of unrest and discontent among this military caste.

Even this army clique has a striking similarity with the von Schleicher group of Steel Helmet veterans who were no less opposed in Germany to the Weimar politicians than Hitler's Storm Troopers. But when they secured power in Germany, as a cabinet headed by General Araki may secure it in Japan, they found themselves dangling in air, with no mass support of fascist organization to make real either their threats or their promises.

Finally, there is the opposition to Japan's ruling classes which exists outside the ranks of the army as well as outside the peculiar limitations of the military mind. How large this is has been unknown for some years because of the suppression by police of all radical activity and the systematic terrorization campagn against all liberals who have dared to raise their voices.

It is safe to say that it is not the working class, incompletely organized in Japan even in trade unions, against which the industrial rulers of Japan may be forced in the next few months to organize an open military-fastist dictatorship. The revolution which threatens monopoly capital in Japan is still a democratic revolution, directed by small entrepreneurs against the stranglehold of five big banks and by exploited farmers against the parasitic battening of their landlords.

There are other indications besides the recent elections that this next step may not be long in coming. The Seiyukai, traditional big business party in Japan, has been louder in recent months in denunciation of parliamentary government than the army officers themselves. There have been signs that the "positive policy" in North China and in Mongolia, although little less successful in absorbing the energies of a restless army, has found at home a somewhat jaded public. Increasing deficits have threatened to check the armaments-fostered industrial boom, and the agricultural depression has grown worse instead of better.

A military oligarchy, led by General Araki or Doihara, would have as little chance of translating the fine phrases of the young army officers into rice and honor for the Japanese people as once Schleicher had in Germany. But there are already organized fascist movements, led by men like Baron Hiranuma or Toyama, which could complete, with army support, a new rampart for the threatened monopolists and landlords of Japan.

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Is Rome Ready for Peace?

CARLO ZUCCA

ROME.

HARASSED by military setbacks in Ethiopia and pressed hard by the increasing economic crisis at home, Premier Mussolini is making serious efforts to end the African war, it is reported in well-informed quarters here.

Italian emissaries, according to these reports, have attempted to obtain the services of a Cairo lawyer and politician prominent in the Coptic church to sound Emperor Haille Selassie about peace terms. These efforts were unsuccessful, but similar moves toward a peace which would save Italy's face are being made through British intermediaries.

It is said here that Francis W. Rickett, the British oil promoter who almost cornered a large oil concession in Ethiopia last fall, visited Mussolini several times in recent weeks. In the course of their conversations, Il Duce is said to have emphasized the economic difficulties to which he is subjected. Italy must import most of her raw materials and is forced to pay for everything she purchases abroad with foreign exchange. Lires are not accepted.

Mussolini is said to have made it clear to Rickett that he would like to terminate the war in some manner that would maintain his prestige both at home and abroad.

It is believed here that Rickett will soon be on his way to Adis Ababa to assume his duties as confidential mediator between Mussolini and Haille Selassie. The choice of a private emissary is partly due to Mussolini's bitter suspicion of Great Britain and his conviction that he has nothing to gain through official channels.

Rickett's diplomatic technique will probably consist of trying to convince both the Italian and the Ethiopian governments that they will soon face a deficiency of war materials, food supplies and money and that the best thing for both parties would be to settle the dispute before ruin overwhelms them.

The government continues to prepare for a long war, but the sanctions and the failure to make any real headway in Ethiopia have increased the strength of those Italians who want to terminate the conflict.

Although Il Duce floods the press with stories of Italian victories, it is becoming increasingly obvious that the military conquest of Ethiopia is not the simple thing it appeared to be last autumn. The Italian army is modernized and well-equipped with bombing planes. But these planes are effective only where there are strategic places to be attacked. Ethiopia contains few cities and to hurl bombs from the air at guerilla troops on the ground is like shooting fleas with howitzers.

Opposition to the African adventure is spreading in Italy. Many are now conscious of the fact that Mussolini blames sanctions for conditions which existed before those sanctions were applied. Last December, for example, the number of bankruptcies among middle and small businessmen in Rome was 120 percent higher than the average during the preceding three months.

Discontent is increasing among the middle-classes as well as among the workers and peasants. In the restaurants and cafes of Rome, people now talk more or less openly about the hundreds of "volunteers" who refuse to be shipped off to Africa. Forty peasants were recently arrested in Sardinia for demonstrating against the war. In Caccamo the Podesta and the local fascist secretary were killed.

The situation here was dramatically illuminated by the alleged suicides of the banker Feltrinelli and the Viscount di Modrone. These high figures of finance and of the fascist regime were panic-stricken by the economic crisis created by the war. They feared the collapse of the fascist regime and decided to transfer their fortunes abroad.

Feltrinelli shipped out of Italy 765,000,000 lire. This included 140,000,000 lire of his own; 380,000,000 belonging to the Viscount di Modroni, former mayor of Milan; and 240,000,000 belonging to the city council.

When this was discovered, Feltrinelli died. The Corriere de la Serra reported that the banker had "committed suicide." But another newspaper, the Regime Fascista, attributed his death to an "accident while hunting." It is common belief that the industrialist Motta and Mussolini's brother-in-law, Mattaloni, were mixed up in the affair. Soon afterward, the Viscount di Modroni "committed suicide" under equally curious circumstances.

The profoundly pessimistic mood current among the bourgeoisie and even among high officials, is reflected within the Fascist Grand Council. Here the old conflict between Il Duce and Farinacci, former secretary of the Fascist Party, is more acute than ever. The immediate crisis within the Grand Council is due to the economic calamities of Italy and to the wdespread discontent of the people. There are even many highly-placed fascists who believe that Mussolini committed an unpardonable blunder in embarking upon the Ethiopian war. The general insecurity has further been intensified by the problem of supplies. Italy's gasoline reserves for aviation purposes, for example, cannot last more than about a year and a half, if that long.

Some of Il Duce's closest collaborators and rivals now feel that as long as he is in power it will be impossible to end the African war in time to avoid complete catastophre and in a manner that will save Italy's prestige. Mussolini has been making frantic efforts to out-argue his discontented lieutenants. He personally writes almost daily for the Popolo d'Italia.

But Mussolini can no longer conceal that the prospects of the African adventure grow darker from day to day. Last fall, he embarked upon the conquest of Ethiopia with the boast that the war would be over in a few months. The recall of General de Bono was an admission of failure. This was followed by General Graziani's "advance," again accompanied by bombastic predictions. Victory was to be achieved before the rainy season set in. Then came the almost complete annihilation of the Legion of October 28, the crack regiment of hand-picked fascists. This catastrophe further dimmed Mussolini's prestige and lent weight to the faction within the Grand Council which is anxious to terminate the war now.

The fall of the Laval cabinet, which had supported Mussolini in the councils of Europe and the debacle of the Hoare-Laval plan, further compelled Il Duce to look for a graceful way out of the war. With growing tension in Europe and the Far East, peace in Africa becomes indispensible.

Mussolini himself blames the British for his orientation toward Germany. It is reported that he recently told a foreign correspondent here: "England is forcing us into the arms of Germany and Japan." At the same time, a bitter campaign against the Soviet Union is being carried on by semi-official government organs like the Giornale d'Italia and leading fascist newspapers like the Popolo d'Italia. These attacks are coupled with suggestions for an Italian-German rapprochement.

The reported conversations between Mussolini and Francis W. Rickett mean that Il Duce is beginning to feel the full consequences of his gamble for colonies. The internal economic crisis has been intensified by the sanctions approved by fifty-four countries and this may lead to a serious political crisis unless Il Duce acts promptly. The bourgeoisie itself feels increasingly that Mussolini's policy is endangering its own future and there are financiers and politicians for whom his removal from power may soon become a practical political necessity. This makes the termination of the African war advisable for Mussolini who appears to be looking for the favorable opportunity and the proper intermediaries. Actual negotiations will no doubt be heralded in advance by inspired reports in the press of smashing Italian victories which will enable Mussolini to pose, both at home and abroad, as the generous conqueror who knows when to stop.

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Is The U. S. A. Preparing?

MARGUERITE YOUNG

WASHINGTON, D. C.

FOURTEEN thousand four hundred American Red Cross nurses have been notified of specific, individual assignments for which each must report for active military duty on the declaration of war. More than one hundred have replied to the U.S. Army officials, "Thank you, no."

Quietly and efficiently, the War Department has set in motion a new plan for mobilization of the nation's nurse power. That is how precisely, how minutely it is organizing the country for "M-Day"—the symbol for the day of mobilization. Already the Department has blue-printed American industry and placed blank contracts for war supplies in the safes of thousands of manufacturers. And already it has a reserve of 96,000 officers, including doctors, dentists and other professional men.

Now it has turned to nurses. Major J. A. Rogers of the Army Medical Reserve Corps, chief of the planning and training division of the Surgeon General's office, explained the situation in Army Medical Bulletin No. 32, issued last July. He wrote that the creation of a "formal" nurse reserve corps analogous to the officers' reserve corps "would be difficult to defend for several reasons." The reasons were technical ones. Therefore the War Department depends upon the Red Cross for its mobilization plans. It found that its previous plan for the procurement of nurses "was not a success." Hence a new one was evolved. Major Rogers explained it, adding

> Reserve nurses enrolled as provided for . . . must agree to serve in time of threatened or actual hostilities and to hold themselves in readiness to join for duty on the day the unit or other activity to which they are assigned begins to mobilize for active service.

The plan under which nurses now receive their mobilization assignments is simple. The Surgeon General of the Army obtained from the national Red Cross a roster of nurses "available for mobilization assignment in each corps area." These lists, made up separately for each of the nine geographical areas which the Army designates as corps areas, were forwarded to the corps area commanders. Army regulations provide that

> corps area commanders will assign three nurses in accordance with their mobilization requirements. Subsequent to M-Day, each corps area commander is charged with the procurement of such additional reserve nurses as may be needed for all activities to be mobilized or operated by him.

If you inquire about all this at the War Department or at the Red Cross, as I did, you meet surprise. There's nothing to get excited about, they insist. The nurses are not now being required to pledge to do anything they haven't already promised to do. The point is, every nurse joining the Red Cross must agree, when she signs up, to serve on active duty in case of "emergency."

But under the present system, a nurse who moves from one town to another *must notify the War Department* as well as the Red Cross. And instead of thinking of her pledge to serve in an "emergency" as referring to flood or disaster, she will have the acute awareness that it also means war. It means that she may expect a telegram notifying her to report for duty. And knowing exactly to which hospital or unit she belongs, *she must report for active duty without further ado.*

The new plan also means the War Department has tightened its lines for M-Day—Mobilization Day. According to Major Rogers,

> the problem of a reserve of nurses for the Army immediately has been removed from the possibility of confusion attendant upon hurried recruiting after M-Day, and placed upon a practical basis.

If you persist, the War Department will admit that considerable "misunderstanding" and "confusion" followed their dispatch of the assignments. Oddly enough, many of the nurses apparently had not realized what their original enrollment signified. And some apparently answered that they did not want war.

Officials scurried for soothing syrup and poured it into such a propaganda channel as the American Journal of Nursing. The February issue of this publication carried mollify-

HEADQUARTERS SECOND CORPS AREA
Office of the Surgeon
Governors Island, New York

Subject: Mobilization Assignment.

To:

1. Your name has been given to these Headquarters for assignment in the Second Corps Area to an Army Reserve Hospital Unit. You are assigned, therefore, to 3rd Auxillary Surgical Group, which in the event of a national emergency will be assembled in NYC. You will receive instructions to report to the Commanding Officer of this hospital for duty only in the event of a national emergency of such magnitude as calls for a mobilization of large defense forces.

2. This assignment is not to be considered in any way as interfering with your present civilian status and occupation, but merely as a preparedness measure. Your direct relationship to the Red Cross is not changed in any particular and as in the past, you will be expected to take part in activities where the services of Red Cross Nurses may be indicated, and also to keep the Red Cross informed of changes in address.

3. Not until you are called into active service and have executed the requisite oath of office will your status become military. When in active service you will be subject to all the rules and regulations governing the Nurse Corps and will receive the pay and allowances of Nurses on the Regular Army list. Your promptness in cooperating in preparedness plans for National Defense will be appreciated.

4. Please sign the inclosed acceptance of this assignment and return to these Headquarters in the inclosed envelope, which does not require postage.

For the Corps Area Surgeon:

T. E. Darby

T. E. DARBY,
Lt. Col., Medical Corps,
Assistant.

2-Incls:

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ing articles by Major Julia C. Stimson, head of the regular Army nurse corps. She was in charge of all American Army and reserve nurses in France during the World War.

The assignment to duty and the nurses' acceptance "does not mean that she is thus giving her approval of war as a means of solving international differences," Major Stimson wrote last month. It "does not put her into the Army." It only means

> that a nurse indicates her willingness to do her share in a national emergency. . . . It does mean that if war is impossible to prevent, she will be asked to volunteer for service with the reserve unit to which she is assigned.

The fact is, the nurse promised to volunteer when she enrolled with the Red Cross. *Now she knows exactly where to report for active service.* Of course, as Major Stimson pointed out, she can always resign from the Red Cross. The present system, under which 14,400 nurses have received their "mobilization assignments," is in Major Stimson's magnificent euphemism, "just long view planning."

Worker, Scholar, Banker

JOHN L. SPIVAK

PARIS.

THERE was a group of Polish workers in front of the paper factory in Czestochowa when we walked up. My translator explained that I was an American who had come to Poland to see how the people lived and that I wanted to ask them some questions. One of the group, a middle-aged man, beamed at me good naturedly while another said incredulously:

"He came all the way from America to talk to us?"

My translator nodded.

"Eh! They live better in America than here," said another with a gesture intimating that there was no comparison. "Here we are starving to death. But"—and he looked at me inquiringly—"why does America care how we live?"

"Because how you live, what you think and what the people are doing will affect Poland and what happens in Poland affects Europe and what happens in Europe affects America," I explained.

The workers looked puzzled; finally one said, "I don't see how, but I guess you must be a learned man to understand these things and we are dark and ignorant men."

"What do you earn a day?" I asked one.

"I do not work all the time," he smiled.

"How many days do you work?"

"Sometimes I work two days a week. Sometimes three—if I am blessed by God. There is not much work. Most people do not have work. Is that not true?" He turned to the others for verification.

"To think he came all the way from America to learn that most people do not have work," one of them commented wonderingly.

"But when you do work, what do you earn?"

"Eh!" He spat disgustedly. "Nothing." He looked at the others again for verification and they nodded their heads in agreement.

"How much is nothing?"

"Not enough to live on," he repeated.

"Now is it two zloty?"

"No, no," he said pityingly, 'even with two zloty we could live. No, when I make one zloty I make a lot of money—"

"That's what I'm trying to find out—"

"Nobody makes more than one zloty a day," he said with an air that said it was so apparent that I should know better than ask such a stupid question.

The overwhelming majority of workers in Poland are unskilled and they average from eighty groshen to a maximum of four zloty a day—when they work; the skilled workers average from eighty groshen to one zloty and eighty groshen an hour; and the average for all types of workers, including the highly-skilled ones, is about eighty zloty a month (about $20).

"What does it cost you to live?"

"Everything I earn, of course!"

"All right," I said, a little helplessly, "what do you pay rent?"

"More than my hole is worth."

I tried another tack. "What do you eat?"

"Potatoes. What else can I eat when I have no money? And I am very fortunate to have potatoes—" He laughed and touched my sleeve gently. "You do not understand," he said with a great tolerance. "We have nothing else to eat."

"Don't you eat bread?"

"Of course! When we have it, but we do not have it."

"Do you ever eat meat?"

The entire group laughed. "Ah," said one, "I have not eaten meat for so long I have forgotten what it is like."

"You do not understand," the first speaker explained again. "We have no money. When I work I make a zloty—maybe. But most of the time I do not work. And from this zloty I must pay rent and buy food and clothes not only for me but for my wife and my children. So how can we eat meat?" They looked at one another as though this was obvious to anyone with eyes, yet here was a man who had come all the way from distant and fabulously rich America who didn't realize this simplest of things.

"Are you organized?" I asked.

"Of course," he said quickly. "If I were not organized I would now be getting twenty groshen instead of a zloty a day! What could I do alone? If I were not in a union they would take even the potatoes away from me!"

"Has the union done much for you?"

"What can they do? It is a bad time the world over."

"Do they lead you in strikes?"

"If we start them," he grinned. "You see, they used to tell us not to be too excited for conditions were bad everywhere—"

"So what did you do?"

"We talked among ourselves and decided that it was good to have union leaders and to be organized, but we learned to pay no attention to them when they tell us not to get excited—"

"When things got too bad we just had to strike," one of the workers interrupted.

It was time for them to return to work and as they started to enter the factory I asked one more question:

"What do you think will happen if things don't get better?"

They shrugged their shoulders. "Who can tell? No one knows. Certainly we don't. We are ignorant men. The learned maybe know. All we know is that things are very bad for us."

SO I went to the men who were not "dark and ignorant," to the leaders of the government, to the financiers, to the cloistered men who, sheltered from the turmoil of economic and political activities, study conditions and trends with scholarly detachment; and I found that they—

But let me tell of the conversation I had with Henryk Gruber, President of the Polish Postal Savings Bank, one of the country's largest and most influential institutions. When I went to see him, he gave me the impression of youth, vigor and intelligence, yet when I asked whether he thought Poland was coming out of the crisis and if not, why not, he gave me a long answer, the essence of which was that one of the chief reasons why Poland and the rest of the world were not out of the crisis, was "the psychology of fear."

"When do you think Poland will come out of the crisis?"

"That depends upon England and America. When they come out we will come out. They hold the key to world recovery."

Poland, he explained, now plans, like so many other countries in Europe, to become a self-sustaining nation to help it avoid future crises when the rest of the world is affected.

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"Assuming that Poland becomes self-sustaining, that the government succeeds in its plans to industrialize the land, how will you balance production and consumption, the maladjustment of which you agree brought on the present crisis?"

"We are not planning to balance production and consumption; but there is little to fear along that line in Poland for the living level of our people is so low that we could produce for a long time without supplying all their needs."

"Where will they get the money to buy the things produced?"

He shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

"We will, through a long, slow process, gradually raise the wage-scale level so that they can buy."

"But that will reduce profits. Isn't it the aim of business to make profits?"

"We will figure it out somehow," he said, a little sadly.

We talked of the group now ruling Poland's thirty-three and one-half million inhabitants and I asked if the picture I had formed of Poland was accurate: that a small group of between 50,000 to 100,000 people ruled the country and that all others, peasants and workers, simply worked for them, paying tribute for the right to live.

"That is right," he smiled.

"In what period of history has any ruling class voluntarily relinquished its control—which is what you expect this group to do when you expect them to relinquish even a good measure of their profits?"

"The government in time will level the sharp and wide distinctions between the rulers and the workers," he said hopefully.

"How?"

"We have our best minds figuring that out now. It is a long process."

"And it hasn't been figured out yet?"

"Some things we have figured out; it's a long process. It cannot be done over night. When anyone tells you he has a plan for Poland which can work, he is a charlatan."

So I learned that the financiers are in as much of a muddle as the small business men and the "dark and ignorant" workers outside their factory gates. So I went to the men of learning, like Edward Lipinsky, professor of economics and director of one of Poland's leading economic research institutions.

"Poland," said the scholarly professor, "is in a very acute crisis—like the rest of the world. But I believe we are beginning to see our way out of it. Business is improving a bit as it is improving in a great many countries.

"Assuming that Poland will come out of it, what plans is the country making to avoid similar crises in the future?"

He looked a bit puzzled and I explained: "If we know what made us sick it may be possible to avoid a repetition of the illness by taking certain precautions. What caused this economic illness from which we are suffering?"

"Cheap money," he said definitely. "There was so much money available at such cheap rates during the boom days that everybody borrowed and enlarged his plants. The result was that we had plants turning out much more than was necessary."

"Then the crisis was caused by too much production which consumption did not absorb?"

"No. The trouble lay in the failure to balance production and production.'

"I don't understand," I said.

"For instance," he explained, "one factory, let us say, produces a vast amount of machinery. Another factory produces tools. There is no balance between the factory producing tools and the factory buying tools with the result that the tool factory, for instance, produces a great deal more than is needed and has to stop work."

"Assuming that your theory is right as to the cause of the crisis, is Poland, in its efforts to get out of it and escape future ones, now balancing production and production?

"No," he smiled, "we do not believe in that."

"But that was the cause, wasn't it?"

"Yes, and a planned economy would be necessary to avoid it in the future, but we don't believe in that."

"All right," I laughed. "You don't believe in it. Will you tell me why?"

"Because we believe in permitting capitalism to function independently."

"Then without this planned economy to regulate production and production, as you call it, will you not again face precisely the same conditions that produced the present crisis?"

"I think so," he smiled.

"Then all of Poland's efforts to get out the crisis, which is causing tremendous hardship to the people, will eventually lead it only to another financial crisis?"

"I think so," he smiled again. "The rest of the world is doing the same. The only place where there is a planned economy is in Russia, but we cannot tell what that planned economy will result in as yet."

"Then what the rest of the world is actually doing is striving by might and main to get out of this crisis in order to get into another one?"

"I think so," he said again. "Germany will have a crisis within another year. Italy, England, France—they are all inevitably going the way of another crisis."

"And that means that the people will have still less to eat, earn less money, there will be more unemployed—"

"I think so," he said with scholarly caution.

"Then what will happen?"

He stared out of the window and then back to his nice new modernistic desk. "War. Revolution. Who knows?"

"Then the picture we have of Poland is that of a country inflicting terrific hardships upon its millions of inhabitants in an effort to get out of the crisis by a procedure which produced the present one. Isn't that rather insane?"

"I think so," he smiled gently, "but that is the world as it is."

Heil Furtwaengler!

DAVID EWEN

A FEW weeks ago there appeared in The New York Times an unobtrusive item which seems to have eluded public attention, even though its implications were of more than transitory importance. It commented upon the fact that Wilhelm Furtwaengler, the eminent music-director of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra—whose appointment as conductor of the New York Philharmonic has just been announced—came on a guest-visit to the Vienna Philharmonic where, at the last moment, he decided to substitute for a previously scheduled Mendelssohn symphony one by Robert Schumann because of "lack of rehearsals." The item also suggested that this specious explanation failed to satisfy the Viennese music-public who seemed to perceive that this puppet-move was manipulated by strings that extended all the way to Goebbels' office in Berlin.

This item, it seems to me, is of first importance, because it further clarifies Furtwaengler's position to those of our American music-lovers who are still in doubt about it. For three years now, American newspapers have made him into something of a heroic figure who, from time to time, was not afraid to defy high Nazi officials when he felt that his artistic standards were debased. Furtwaengler has frequently been depicted as fighting a lonely and sublime battle to save great musical art in Germany from the gutter, without considering the possible consequences of his defiance.

This pretty picture is a far cry from the truth. Furtwaengler is not the high idealist, the nympholeptic artist blindly fighting for his ideals. Consult his career of the past

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three years with microscopic thoroughness and you will be more inclined to consider him a clear-headed opportunist who is driven, not by idealistic forces, but by a colossal vanity; he has made few moves without calculating how it will benefit his career. Those who have been intimately acquainted with him know well that for three years he has assumed a straddling position, as far as his stand towards Nazism is concerned, because it served his ends to do so; with a certain degree of grace, he managed to give the outside world, hostile to Nazi philosophy, the impression that he was on their side, while at the same time his hand was extended in a Nazi salute.

When I was in Bayreuth in 1931, a German music-critic confided to me that Furtwaengler in a very recent conversation had told him that should Hitler ever ascend to power, he—Furtwaengler—would become the *Generalmusikdirektor* of Germany, a sort of dictator over all musical activities. Why Furtwaengler should have gloated over a contingency which, at that time, seemed so remote, puzzled me, particularly because he was at the time the highest esteemed conductor in Germany and was in no need of satisfying his vanity with day-dreaming. It was not until I spoke with him personally, outside the *Festspielhaus,* that the answer struck me with full force. It will be recalled that in the 1931 Bayreuth Festival, Furtwaengler was making his first appearances at the Wagnerian shrine; but he was sharing the baton with Arturo Toscanini, who had triumphed so magnificently at Bayreuth the year before. In asking Furtwaengler what he thought of Toscanini, I was bewildered to find him ridiculing the great Italian conductor and, with absurd gestures, suggesting that the maestro was nothing more than a meticulous time-beater. It was then that I realized for the first time how envious he was of Toscanini's great triumphs in Germany; how deplorably punctured his inflated vanity had been to discover that the limelight of that year's festival was focused not upon his initial appearances, but upon Toscanini's return; how vitally he felt—and unjustifiably, I think—that his own crowning position in German music was being threatened by the performances of this Italian genius who taught even the most chauvinistic of German critics that there were other gods besides Furtwaengler. It was then that I realized that like a spoiled child Furtwaengler was consoling himself with elusive dreams: when he would become *Generalmusikdirektor* of all Germany he would reassume his magisterial position in German music; and in the Bayreuth festival of the future he would permit no Toscanini to rob his halo.

It is, therefore, naive to believe that, when Hitler finally assumed power in 1933 and offered Furtwaengler the promised musical post, Furtwaengler had any intention of becoming an obstacle in the Nazi program. In view of the fact that *Kulturkammer* announced its artistic creed as early as May of 1933—which openly denounced not only music by Jews but also the music of modernistic composers—without eliciting a murmur of dissension from Furtwaengler, it should be sufficient proof that Furtwaengler was not greatly concerned about the Nazi artistic policy. It was only after his prestige had been considerably weakened by the fact that his vigorous refusal to have Toscanini return to Bayreuth in the summer of 1933 had been vetoed by the more powerful forces at *Wahnfried* (who realized that Toscanini was the great financial hope for the Festival)* that Furtwaengler petulantly announced that he would no longer have any connection whatsoever with Bayreuth and that, for the first time, he began to wave a banner of independence at the face of his superiors.

Furtwaengler's ensuing struggles with the *Kulturkammer* (so widely publicized in European and American newspapers) were motivated, not by artistic ideals nor even by any newly aroused antagonism towards the Nazi leaders (when I was in Germany in late spring of 1933 I learned on good evidence that, notwithstanding the Bayreuth dispute, Furtwaengler was still a personal friend of both Hitler and Goebbels) but by sound practical reasons. For example, the first of Furtwaengler's historic battles with the Nazi officials (his vigorous opposition to the expulsion of Jewish musicians from the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra) occurred simultaneously with his acceptance of an invitation to conduct symphony-concerts in London and a Wagner festival in Paris (June, 1933). Furtwaengler must have known well that, as a Nazi, he would arouse considerable antagonism in both of these cities. He knew well, too, that he was too much the idol of the Berlin music-audiences not to make his removal a colossal tactical blunder. He was, therefore, permitted his dissenting vote; and from the distance of Paris, London and New York it seemed a heroic gesture. It was, of course, impossible to tell from that distance that he was merely shadow-boxing, and that his blows could not possibly hurt anyone. But the result was, as Furtwaengler must have anticipated, that he was acclaimed in Paris and London not only as a great musician but as the only musician who dared to raise a voice in defiance of the Nazis.

I had an opportunity to speak with Furtwaengler in Paris during this visit in 1933 and I must confess that at that time I was completely convinced of his integrity. He did not say it in so many words, but he left the strong implication with me that he was vitally opposed to the artistic policies of the Nazi government and would persistently fight against them; and when one of our group asked him why he did not resign from his position with the Berlin Philharmonic to make this plain to the world, he gave the plausible explanation that he felt he was much more important to the musical art fighting its battle in Germany than away from it.

But his actions during the next few months were not as convincing as his words; and these actions suggest strongly that it was not merely artistic integrity that made him shake a defiant fist at his Nazi superiors. When he reassumed his post as conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, in the Fall of 1933, all of the Jewish musicians, with the exception of one, had been ejected from the orchestra; I have failed to locate any report that Furtwaengler raised even a finger of protest at the time. Early in 1934 a visiting violinist was urged by the authorities to substitute for the scheduled Mendelssohn *Concerto* the more Aryan Concerto of Brahms; and, although Furtwaengler was the conductor, there were no rebellious gestures.

It should be recalled that for almost a full year Furtwaengler bent his knee to Nazi dictates before he once again assumed the pose of apostle of true art. This was in the Fall of 1934, when he insisted upon performing Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler,* which the *Kulturkammer* had decreed as non-Aryan music. It should be recalled parenthetically that, at this very time, the Philadelphia Orchestra (confronted by Stokowski's resignation) was seriously considering engaging him as its permanent conductor in 1935. Could it have been (as one European critic suggested to me) that Furtwaengler was merely paving the way for a triumphant return to a country which he knew well was violently anti-Nazi by once again indulging in some shadow-boxing?

But this time Furtwaengler had wounded himself severely by his own blows. This Hindemith episode taught him—to change the metaphor—that it is always dangerous to ride two horses at once. The Philadelphia contract never came to his door; Stokowski finally decided to return for another season; and Furtwaengler had played his game so vigorously that Goebbels' office decided that, notwithstanding the Berlin music-audiences, the maestro deserved severe disciplining. His passport was revoked, and for six months he was deprived of his post with the Berlin Philharmonic. I understand that, after the disciplining, Furtwaengler has meekly submitted his programs to Goebbels' office for approval; the recent Vienna episode forcefully supports this contention. Certainly, since the Hindemith affair, a year ago, the *Kulturkammer* has continued its ruthless destruction of great musical art, and even so staunch an ally of the Nazi government as Richard Strauss could no longer quiescently witness the degenerating spectacle. But, through it all, Furtwaengler has remained the most important musical figure of present-day Germany, giving silent approval—and lending the weight of his international prestige—to all the havoc and waste and corruption of Hitlerism.

* It will be recalled that Toscanini refused to come to Bayreuth in 1933.

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"National Republic"

ALFRED HIRSCH

"ONE DAY I was addressing a group of industrialists. I told them that *they* were the ones supporting Communism. Naturally they were amazed and asked me what I meant.

"'Well,' I said, 'you pay your workers, don't you, and *they* support the Communists with your money.'"

The speaker was Mr. Walter S. Steele, editor of The National Republic, a monthly publication "specializing" in Communism. He added, with a sigh covered over with a plucky smile: "The trouble is there's nothing much you can do about it. The Communists have you coming and going."

The National Republic has been attacking Communism since long before most red-baiting publications were in existence. It has indulged in deliberate falsification, and the spurious use of American "aristocratic" traditions. Further, it is no enemy of anti-Semitism and it heaps praise upon Hearst.

A few months ago an acquaintance teaching at a small midwestern college, showed me a letter he had received from The National Republic informing him that "a friend" had sent in seven dollars and fifty cents to provide a year's subscription for him. It suggested that he might want to do likewise for a colleague. My friend did not fall for this racket and discovered that seven of the forty faculty members had received the same letter. His subscription included both the magazine and The National Republic Lettergram issued periodically in multigraph form, which contains "Confidential Information For Members Only."

The National Republic does not stop at deliberate falsification. At the expense of THE NEW MASSES it indulges in willful distortion as illustrated in the accompanying photographic reproduction obviously intended to give the impression that during the San Francisco General Strike, Communists gave the order: "Shoot to Kill." This is a deliberate lie. It was not the Communists who gave the order "shoot to kill," but the *commander of the militia* as the first two sentences of THE NEW MASSES article (July 17, 1934) unmistakably prove.

First published in 1914 in Muncie, Indiana (and moving to Washington in 1918), the magazine was originally The National Republican and was printed under the patronage of the late George B. Lockwood, later to become secretary of the Republican National Committee. Stockholders in 1932 included James J. Davis, Secretary of Labor from 1921-1930; the Estate of John Wingate Weeks, Secretary of War from 1921-25; John T. Adams, Charles D. Hilles and Claudius H. Huston, all Republican National Committeemen; and Mr. Steele, listed as "formerly secretary of the Delaware County (Indiana) Republican Central Committee." Early in 1925, a few months after Steele had become editor, the publication changed its name to The National Republic and became "non-partisan."

Who are the stockholders of The National Republic, outstanding anti-labor, Jew-baiting sheet?

What is their role in the leadership of the Republican Party?

Why do members of President Roosevelt's Cabinet write for this fascist paper?

It will be remembered that during 1923-24 the Ku Klux Klan had been particularly active in Indiana, having enlarged its program to include opposition to Catholics and Jews as well as to Negroes. Moreover, it captured the Republican Party in Indiana which in November, 1934, elected Governor Edward Jackson, an open supporter if not a member of the Indiana K.K.K. The commands of Democratic "Imperial Wizard" Hiram W. Evans of Atlanta, Georgia (still the Klan's chief) irked D. C. Stephenson, "Grand Dragon" of Indiana, and the Indiana Klan, credited with over 260,000 members in 1923, began to disintegrate. As a result of the K.K.K. fracas, the Indiana Republican Party had acquired a slight odor in national Republican Party circles and this is probably the reason that the magazine now became The National Republic.

Among the men whose signatures grace recent articles favoring expansion of "defense" forces, are George H. Dern, Secretary of War, who writes on "Armies Do Not Start Wars." He concludes that "the people bring about wars and the army brings about peace."

Shortly after his chief's article appeared, Assistant Secretary of War Harry H. Woodring contributes a sprightly article in which he pats the Reserve Officers' Training Corps on the back. He winds up with a *bon mot*, perhaps typical of the cultural level of the Department of War:

"Our schools must not be the ground where the seeds of national defenselessness can be planted." Mr. Woodring will be remembered for his article in Liberty (Jan. 6, 1934) in which he wrote: "The C.C.C. mobilization is thus more than a great military achievement; it is a dress rehearsal of the Army's ability to intervene in combatting the depression." Incidentally, a recent request for a copy from the Macfadden Publications revealed the fact that "no copies of that issue are available."

Still another representative of our war apparatus, Rear Admiral Clark H. Woodward, offers the suggestion that the merchant marine be built up since it "furnishes vessels that our Navy would be helpless without, and a seafaring personnel on which to draw in an emergency."

When questioned about his point of view towards Communism, Dr. Roscoe J. C. Dorsey, attorney and Professor of Jurisprudence at Washington (D.C.) College of Law, and one of the most prolific and learned of National Republic authors, said:

"Communism is nothing new. Look at Plato, Lycurgus, Diocletian, Sir Thomas More, Rousseau, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Lasalle. Since it is not new, there is nothing to it. You ought to read my two articles on 'Old and New Communism.'"

His interviewer assured him that he had, whereupon the erudite law professor patted him on the shoulder and said: "You know, five thousand copies of those articles were re-printed by the California Chamber of Commerce or the California Industrial Association or some organization like that."

Dr. Dorsey then proudly produced a clipping from The Washington Herald (Hearst), which quotes a speech he made last October:

> Communism is a religion itself and teaching it must mean teaching hatred of our Government, disrespect to our flag, wiping out of property rights, *disregard of parents, belief in nudism, free sex relations,* intermarriage with Negroes. (My emphasis, A. H.)

At last, beaming with joy, Dr. Dorsey got around to Germany:

> It's the only regime they can have. Of course I don't like their drive against the Jews. But, after all, the Jews are pretty bright men. Lots of them are doctors, dentists, lawyers, other professionals. And jealousy will spring up when times are hard. So the Germans just decided: "Let's get them." Personally, I have always told my Jewish students to stop their radical activities. One of them was interested in the Townsend plan, for example. I told him he will draw fire down on his race and suggested he stick to the conservative side and be of benefit to his race. . . . But I can't sympathize with those persecutions in Germany.

The magazine itself backs up Dr. Dorsey's slurs, having printed the following, *all contained in one paragraph*:

> A group of students at Harvard, incensed over the radicalism that prevails, burned a "nudist" number of their student publication, the *Lampoon*, recently. Six hundred copies of the issue were confiscated. The issue had already been banned from the mails and newsstands as "immoral, blasphemous and profane." It will be recalled that

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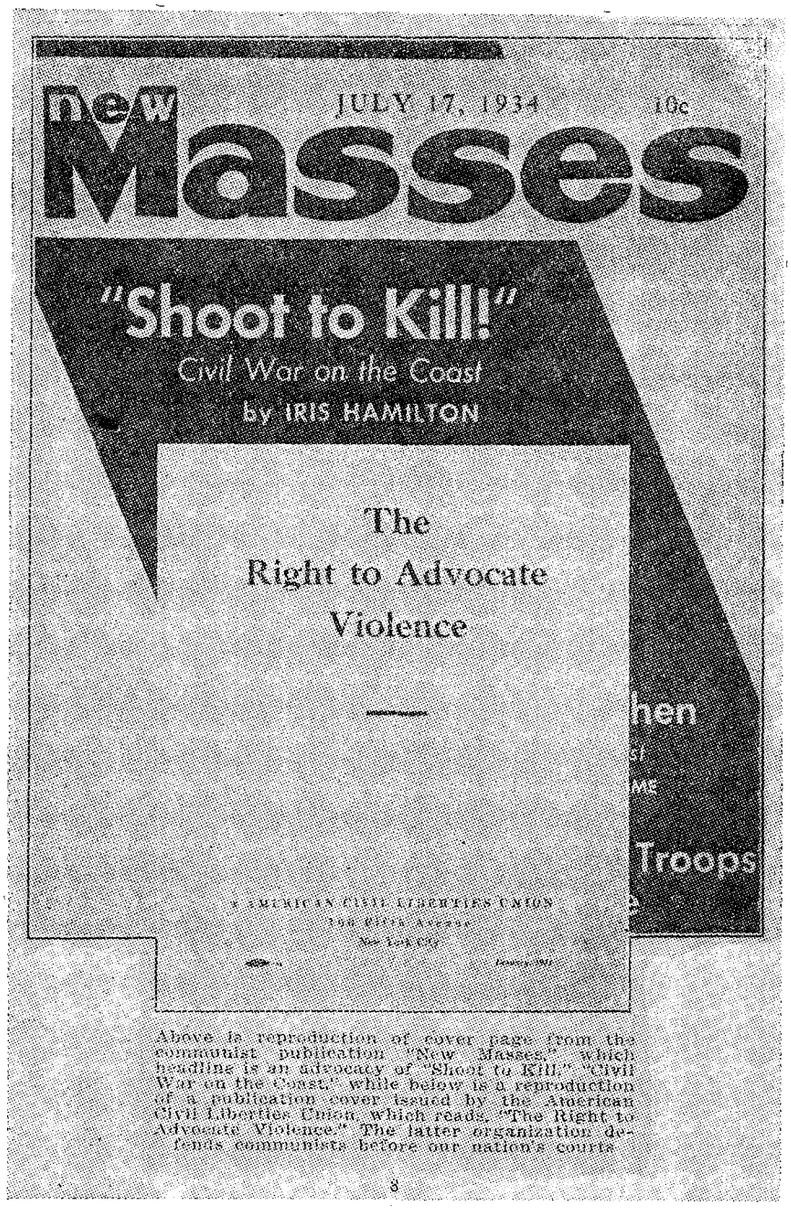

Above is reproduction of cover page from the communist publication "New Masses," which headline is an advocacy of "Shoot to Kill," "Civil War on the Coast," while below is a reproduction of a publication cover issued by the American Civil Liberties Union, which reads, "The Right to Advocate Violence." The latter organization defends communists before our nation's courts.

Harvard University recently placed the portrait of John Reed in its hall of "fame." Reed was once proclaimed by Lenin as "Moscow's best agent in America." . . . Reed's portrait now adorns the walls of his alma mater not many feet from those of George Washington and Samuel Adams.

Dr. Dorsey's anti-Semitism is shared by The National Republic. When Arthur Garfield Hays went to Germany to aid the Reichstag defendants in 1933, we read this heading: "JEW TO DEFEND GERMAN REDS." That same year, as negotiations were being carried on between Ambassador Litvinov and President Roosevelt, immediately preceding recognition of the U.S.S.R., the National Republic printed the following:

COMMISSAR LITVINOFF (FINKELSTEIN) SPEAKS

The reds, through their clever salesman, Mr. Litvinoff (Finkelstein), have been able to hypnotize other nations. . . . Some salesman is Mr. Litvinoff, and some saps are his victims.

Finally, in March, 1934, the magazine praised Ralph M. Easley's articles in the Hearst press on the attempt being made by radicals to "poison the minds of the youth in our public educational institutions." The anti-Communist views of Mr. Easley, president of the National Civic Federation are well known; his anti-Semitic activities were brought to the attention of NEW MASSES readers in the issue of November 6, 1934.

It should be clear by this time that the National Republic and the Hearst press have a real kinship. A summary of Hearst's general policies concludes that:

Hearst militantly upholds the *property rights* and the constitutional form of government. There's only one choice for America and it is not necessary for us to point out that it's the above Hearst policy. (My emphasis, A. H.)

Mr. Steele's office is at 511 Eleventh Street, N.W., Washington. He was deeply complimented by a visit. He said that The National Republic has a monthly circulation of 41,000 (the fact that the magazine's advertising page rate is only $150 would indicate less), in forty-eight states and in 79 percent of the counties of the country and that an average copy is read by seven people while 49 percent of its readers file back copies. He neglected to add that each member of the staff of many newspapers receive free copies and that they have a representative who tours the country requesting individuals to contribute large sums (on a commission basis) so that free subscriptions can be sent to various university faculty members (such as my friend in the Mid-West, for one).

"We don't need a bigger circulation," he said. "The magazine is written for people who can spread its contents. It's used in high schools and colleges, it's read by leaders of patriotic movements. And its circulation is on the increase." (Mr. Steele failed to add that in 1925 the magazine had claimed an average *weekly* circulation of 200,000.)

His interviewer commented on the fact that the magazine was just about evenly divided between anti-Communist material on the one hand and material dealing with American history on the other.

"Why, yes," he said, "we build up that historical stuff to show that Communism aims at our traditions."

Then, pursuing another tack, he stated: "You know, I presented evidence to the Special Congressional Committee on un-American Activities in December, 1934. Here's my report, printed by the government and franked by Hamilton Fish, Jr."

Mr. Steele appeared before the committee as a representative of the Ameritan Coalition, made up of all the sons and daughters of all our wars, of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (listed twice), of the National Sojourners, *Dupont* Chapter (my emphasis, A. H.), of the Anglo-Saxon Federation of America, the Paul Reveres (a university anti-semitic outfit described in NEW MASSES, November 20, 1934) and others. Bainbridge Colby is an officer of the American Coalition .

The report recommends that all aliens who have not applied for citizenship be deported, that all others be fingerprinted, that all naturalized citizens who are Communists lose their citizenship and be deported and finally that teachers' oath bills be enacted throughout the country.

Many men prominent in public life have written for The National Republic. Among them, for instance, is a member of President Roosevelt's Cabinet. Others are Representatives Chadway of Massachusetts, Dies of Texas and Kenney of New Jersey, as well as such Army Officers as General Douglas McArthur, General John McAuley Palmer (retired) and others. Together with The National American, The American Gentile and similar publications, it represents a tendency well crystallized in the American Liberty League and in the Hearst press. Whether or not these publications have any organic relation to either or to each other today is not known, but only their exposure can prevent their ultimate consolidation.

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Goodyear's Big, Happy Family

JOHN BUCHANAN

AKRON, OHIO.

THE night shift went in tense. There was a certain vitreous grimness about the men's lips, something dangerous in their eyes. The "squad" men planted among them felt the pressure of the expectant, hostile silence. They didn't have to worry about *their* jobs. Members of the Goodyear company union, they enjoyed three-year contracts, extra pay and privileges, their pick of the work. The stretch-out campaign that started when N.R.A. went out hadn't touched them.

But there were other workers there who would get a pink slip in the next pay envelope. The squad men had broken a strike in the curing pits hardly two weeks before. A hundred workers had begun a "sit-down" strike against a 10 percent cut in the piece rate.

This time it might not be so easy. The men were sore. And you couldn't spot the "trouble-makers" and have them fired as easily as in the old days. Only last month, the squad men recalled, 1,200 workers in the Firestone plant had pulled a "sit-down" against the firing of one union man and the United Rubber Workers of America had backed them up!

Silently the men took their places at the machines. The early shift washed up and left the big tire room. There was no meeting, no speeches, no strike talk. The squad men, sniffing the air for trouble, could put their fingers on nothing definite. Suddenly somebody pulled a switch. The hum of machines died away. The squad men and the foremen reacted to the startled silence. "Hey, who pulled that switch?"

They were answered by a new wave of sound, the voices of angry men who—though they hardly knew it yet themselves—were on strike.

That was on Thursday, February 13, in the tire room of plant No. 2, of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. It started that way, without official leadership, a spontaneous protest of rank-and-file workers against the company's latest drive on their living standards. It started as a "sit-down" strike. That is, the men did not walk out. There was no picketing. They simply stayed in the shop. And not a wheel turned. The squad men hurried from man to man, trying to get things started, trying to split the workers into pros and cons. But the men remained firm. They met the incoming shift and it joined their movement. They all "sat down" together. They were prepared to sit for a day or a week, until P. W. Litchfield, president of Goodyear, got ready to talk contract with the United Rubber Workers of America.

The "sit down" was not 100 percent successful. Officials of Goodyear Local No. 2 of the U.R.W. of A. "supported the strike as individuals" but they gave the striking workers no leadership against the organized sabotage of the Flying Squadron, the strike-breaking crew that Litchfield has been training since 1913. The strike wavered and there were times when it all but died. The workers could not make up their minds just what kind of action they wanted. But they knew they wanted strike. Litchfield had been handing out wage cuts wholesale since spring, 1935. Lately the stretch-out had been creeping through the many departments like a spreading disease. Messages of support came in from workers in other Akron rubber plants. And despite lack of leadership from above, the strike did not die. On Monday, the workers decided to picket plant No. 2 against the 11 o'clock shift. Plant No. 3 was closed soon after and on Tuesday the men in plant No. 1 "sat down." By Wednesday the strike was complete. Of Litchfield's "Goodyear Family" of 15,000 workers, all but 500 were out.

The worker who told me the story had joined the union after the strike began. "You should have been here," he said. "Believe me, it was some show!" He was seconded by a man in the uniform of a company cop, a worker, so he told me, in one of the other rubber plants. "If I didn't have this uniform on, I'd be out there on the picket line with the Goodyear men myself. Conditions are just about as bad where I work, but at least they don't try to cram it down our throats the way Litchfield does!"

He was probably thinking of the Wingfoot Clan. Through his factory paper, Litchfield has been spewing out a mixture of anti-labor propaganda, militarism, chauvinism and cockeyed economics since 1912. He preaches the familiar doctrine that capital and labor are partners. His most ambitious work as a political economist was the publication in 1919 of *The Industrial Republic,* in the first half-dozen pages of which he "covered" practically everything that it took Karl Marx four volumes to explain.

Lately the Wingfoot Clan has been broadcasting a tale of woe. Profits are declining in relation to sales and the worker-partners will have to accept a longer shift or else take a cut in wages. It has failed to mention that Goodyear's net profit increased $898,276 last year over 1934 and that net sales went up by $28,063,210.03. Also that $3,006,840 was paid out in dividends on first preferred stock and that net profits carried to earned surplus rose to $5,452,240.07. In spite of these amazing figures, however, there is a germ of truth in Litchfield's claims. The tire industry is going in for one of the maddest sprees of dumping in the history of capitalism. The thirty-one concerns which have not yet been squeezed out of the industry have a producing capacity of 69,000,000 tires per year. The potential world market is 49,000,000. Consequently every phase of dumping is attempted.

Try to picture this suicidal anarchy in comparison with the orderly socialist production in the Soviet Union! Tongue in cheek, I dip into *The Industrial Republic* and discover that the Russian Bolshevik "proceeds to build up an autocracy based on ignorance of the most cruel kind . . . bringing about idleness and starvation. . . . Bolshevism is an industrial disease, etc., etc."

I visited the union hall. In one section sat men ready for picket duty. The rank and file had stampeded the last regular union meeting and turned it into a strike meeting. The union had sanctioned the strike. Now at last, things were going along in an organized fashion. A union functionary sat at a table, broadcasting strike news over a loud-speaker system so that it could be heard in every corner of a room that holds three to four thousand men. At one end of the hall, women workers were setting up a first aid station. Outside, on E. Market Street, five thousand picketed the plant, occasionally calling out, "Come on over—join our ranks!" to the sprinkling of would-be scabs who looked yearningly at the plant.

My striker friend laughed. "I belonged to the Carpenters Union once, in Parkersburg, West Virginia. We won a strike down there in 1929 but we had a hell of a time. Now look at this. This union is organized the right way. Like to see 'em break this strike!" He might have added that Litchfield organized his Flying Squadron in 1913 to combat the old type of union. No matter what organized craft might strike, the squad boys were trained to go into that department and take over production. But the best the squad boys can do now is to hold prayer meetings, run full page ads in the local papers and generally try to influence public opinion against the strikers.

"What about the injunction?" I asked. "Do you know they're talking about bringing in the National Guard to enforce it?"

He shoved a local paper into my hands. The headlines said that every other local of the U.R.W. of A. would walk out if an attempt were made to enforce the court order. Milk drivers and other organized workers not in rubber were talking strike.

"See that?" he said. "Know what it means? It means a general strike!" And by the size of his grin I gathered that he would not be sorry to see it happen.

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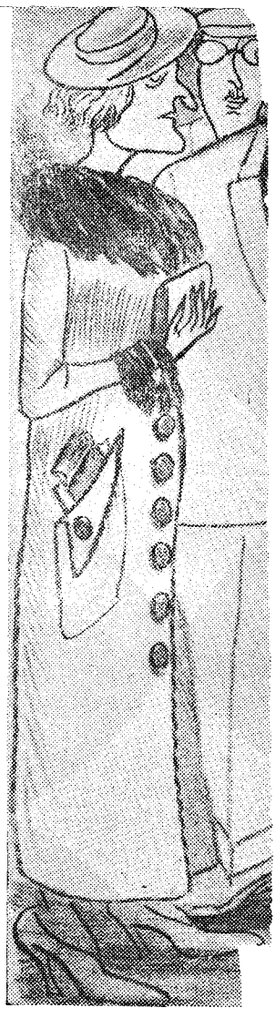

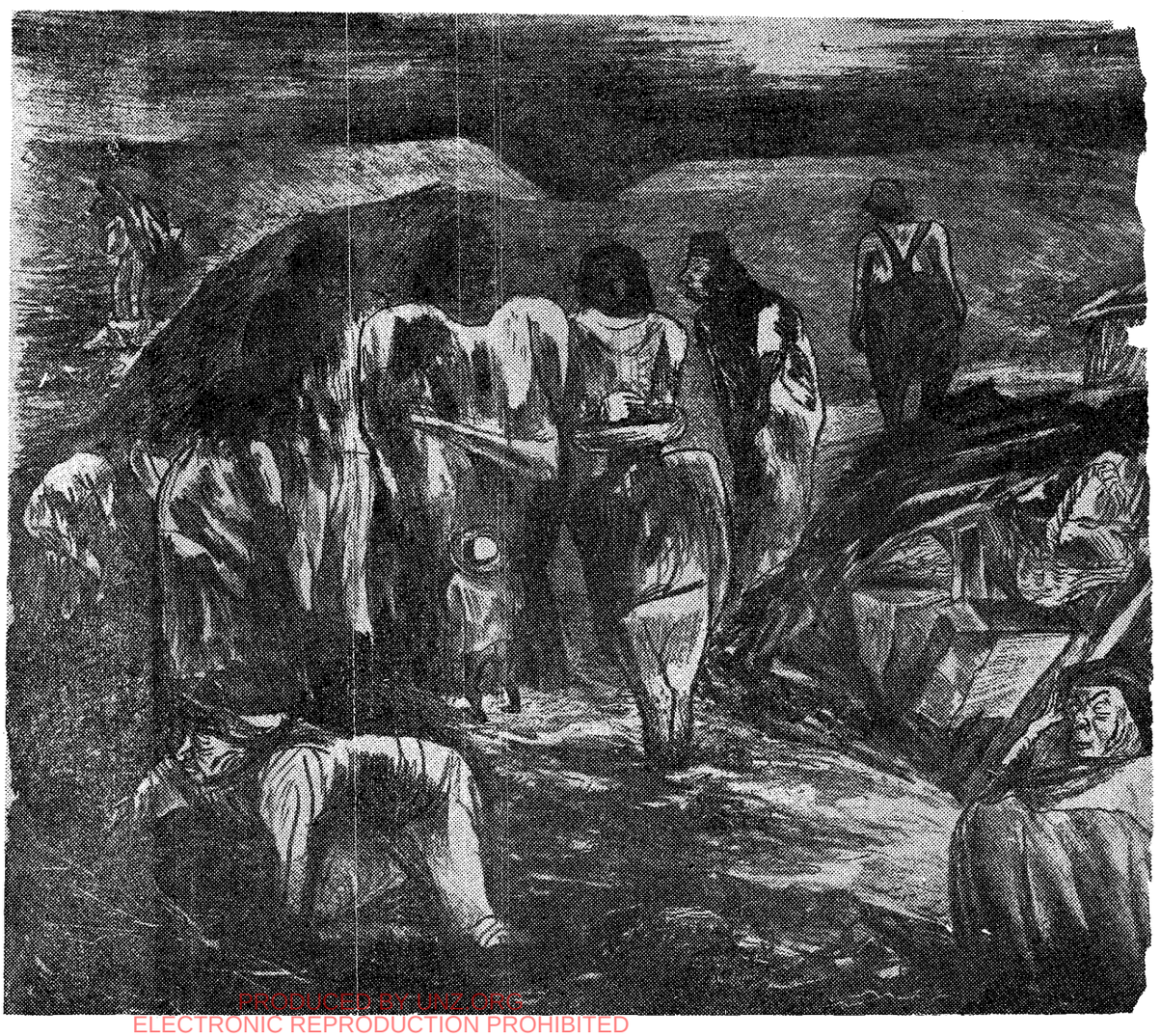

Left
DUMPING GROUND

Right
NOTE No. 1—1935

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Four Lithograph

Jose Clemente Orozco

Left
MISERY

Right
TOURISTS IN MEXICO

Courtesy Delphic Studios

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At Last, a Negro Theater?

MICHAEL GOLD

THE art of the theater is perhaps the synthesis of a nation's culture. But imagine a nation of twelve million people who have never had a serious theater of their own! I mean, of course, the Negro nation within the borders of the United States; a nation capable of great art, a nation that has already developed poets, novelists and musicians; a nation, moreover, whose people are born artists and love fantasy, laughter, rhythm and poetic speech.

Why has there never been a Negro theater? Is it for the same reason that caused the Hebrew poet to hang his harp upon a willow tree by the waters of Babylon and vow never to sing while his people were slaves of the foreign captivity? Only in the past two decades has there been any real beginning of Negro art in America. The renaissance, as is well known, spread from Harlem. Every culture needs a friendly soil; and it is out of Harlem, too, I believe, that we may hope for the rise of a Negro National Theater.

Harlem is, numerically, the biggest Negro city in the world; it is certainly no bed of roses, this region of shabby, overcrowded, tubercular tenements; but its people have lost the chain-gang fears and have developed the intense pride and group consciousness in which a great theater in born.

Many students of Negro life have seen a kinship between them and the Elizabethans. Negroes have the flare of Shakespeare and Marlowe for melodrama in the grand manner, the same exuberant love for shimmering, lusty, tumbling, rich words, the same full-sailed emotionalism, the same expansive belief in the glory of the world.

All the Negro plays thus far, except for one or two exceptions, have been written by white playwrights. These have been noble efforts to create a Negro dramaturgy; I call to mind the fine plays by Paul Green and Em Jo Basshe, among others; but just as no Frenchman or Russian can ever hope to create an American literature (nor does he try to), so must the true Negro theater remain unborn until Negro playwrights have banded themselves together for the task.

The white writers who attempt to reproduce Negro speech have found themselves straying into the realm of Elizabethan poetry. How arid, poor and mechanical is the dialogue of the average Broadway success, a thing like a blueprint's directions, all skeleton plot and no soul! But Negro protagonists need a poet to express them and I submit, it can only be a Negro poet; for he learned this poetry at his mother's breast.

Negroes have given America all the truly native music it has thus far produced; and I believe that they can give us our first truly poetic theater, a theater in which poetry will be at home, not the poor, snubbed relative of the commercialists.

But it is the Negro writers who must write the plays. In the past three years several attempts have been made in Harlem to organize a serious Negro theater. The finest natural actors were assembled, eager to be used; but lack of money and script trouble prevented any consummation—and chief of all was this same script trouble.

Last season two groups in Harlem were wrestling with this problem—the Negro People's Theater and the Negro National Theater. This season, a Negro theater is actually functioning at last in Harlem, many of its people being former members of the other two groups.

It is called, simply, the Negro Theater and is a Federal project, under the W.P.A. program. Its first play is now running: *Walk Together, Chillun,* by Frank Wilson; and very few New Yorkers have heard of it, and fewer go to see it.

Reason: it is a Federal project. Uncle Sam, dressed like the Laocoon in a writhing garland of poisonous red-tape, gave this theater enough money to put on a show, but he does not allow them to advertise the show after it is produced. The commercial managers have probably done this deed, among many others. And, as they probably hoped, it is endangering the success of the first Negro Theater.

I went up to the old Lafayette the other night to see Frank Wilson's play. Harlem hasn't heard about it; the prices are incredibly low, but there were only some thirty people in the house.

The play is the story of a small Northern town whose mayor, searching for cheap labor, imports a group of Southern Negroes to work on the new roads. The established Negro group who have been living in this town resent, as much as many of the whites, the proletarian immigrants. Trouble follows; and the leader of the Southern road-gang, a giant played by Gus Smith with a romantic power that suggests Robeson, Gilpin and others in the great line of masculine Negro acting, is killed while trying to defend his people.

The play was written by a member of the Negro nation for his own people and not for whites; and its moral is the treatment given Negroes in the north is not much different from that given them in the south; so that Northern and Southern Negroes should learn to "walk together."

Mr. Wilson is at times a fumbling writer, but through his faltering script there shines the folk passion, the rich Negro poetry. A host of authentic characters, violent, humorous and heroic, people the old Lafayette stage and make for a rousing evening. There are several scenes that reach a crescendo of song and tragedy that redeem the stretches of Broadway writing into which Mr. Wilson, a man of the routine theater, occasionally succumbs.

But it is a curiously honest play; and the white spectator comes away with the feeling that he does not have after such orgies of Hollywood sensationalism as *Green Pastures* or *Porgy and Bess;* he has not been slumming, poking in garbage for a thrill; but he has been admitted to the bosom of a family and has heard them gravely and humorously thresh out their serious problems.

This play is well worth the trip to Harlem. Even if it were not as good as it is, it would be worth encouraging, for it can be made the cornerstone of a permanent Negro theater in America and that should be our goal.

There will be other productions soon by this theater. The group, as I have said, has no money for advertising and promotion. They must make a commercial success of their project, under this enormous handicap, by July.

There are 300 people working in the theater and they have all realized that here is a historic chance for giving their nation what it has needed—an art theater. The stage hands worked for two days and nights, without overtime pay, before the first curtain was lifted on February 4th. A collection had to be taken among the workers, too, to pay for last-minute necessities that could not be secured through the choked channels of Red Tape River. Actors, box-office men, ushers, carpenters, electricians, producer, director—everyone has felt a rare and devoted enthusiasm as the project has developed.

We others must not let them down. The Urban League is one of the sponsors of the new theater; James W. Ford, the Communist leader of Harlem, has given it some help; the Amsterdam News, Father Divine, A. Phillip Randolph and many other Harlem leaders have shown their interest and approval. But no sustained effort has been made to move and organize the Harlem masses into support of their own theater. Such a chance as this may not come again for a long time. Those of us who care deeply about the future of Negro culture and who feel that a permanent Negro theater will help elevate the whole American stage, must get in and help. Here is a social and esthetic task worthy of the support of big-hearted, radical New York—the New York that knows how to make daily miracles of revolution and art.

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Three Years of Hitler

RUDOLF BREDA

LAST week marked the third anniversary of the burning of the Reichstag, planned and executed by the National Socialists for the purpose of seizing absolute power in Germany. That fantastic frame-up was the beginning of the nationwide Nazi terror and a fitting celebration for Hitler's accession to power.

A few days before the Reichstag was burned, Chancellor Hitler broadcast his Four Year Plan for the salvation of Germany. He promised to "free the peasant from his debts; to make him master of his own land and property; and to give the worker once more bread and work by completely abolishing unemployment."

Three years have passed since these alluring pledges were boomed over Germany's radio stations, and it is now possible to make an objective estimate of fascist planning.

When the Nazis came to power, the number of Germany's unemployed workers was officially given as 7,000,000. Today the Hitler regime asserts that there are "only" 2,500,000 unemployed left in the country. If these figures were accurate, it would mean that three years of fascism have given employment to 4,500,000 workers previously out of work. But the figures of the *Krankenkassen,* the compulsory health-insurance system, and the *Invalidenversicherungen,* the compulsory disability insurance system, indicate a different story. According to these official figures, the number of employed workers in Germany has in the past three years increased by only 2,000,000.

That leaves 2,500,000 workers, previously unemployed, to be accounted for. The official statistics of the Nazi regime say nothing about them.

What happened to these 2,500,000 workers? Why is the Hitler government silent about them?

About 1,000,000 were driven into the so-called labor camps. Here they are compelled to work on military projects. They receive no pay; their food is atrocious and insufficient; and they are under a severe military discipline. About 500,000 other workers have been pressed into regular army service, following the enactment of Hitler's military service laws. About 600,000 women were thrown out of their jobs in order to make room for men. These women workers have received no compensation or relief pay of any kind. The remaining 400,000 workers lost their meager relief at the various "cleansings" carried on by the Nazis.

All these figures are taken from the official reports of the Nazi government. They reveal with bitter eloquence how fascism has carried out its pledge to end unemployment.

And what is true of work is true of bread. Three years of the Nazi regime have not been able to ensure the German people the minimum of food. Butter, eggs, pork, rice and onions are as scarce as diamonds; and in many parts of the country it is difficult to get even potatoes, the last refuge of the starving. Amidst this universal hunger, Hitler has curtailed the importation of foodstuffs in order to increase the importation of war materials.

How then does the Nazi regime propose to "solve" the food problem? This economic problem is intimately bound up with the political policies of fascism. The Nazi theoreticians have coined the phrase "superfluous eaters" to describe all those whom fascism wishes to exterminate. The Storm Troops have murdered 4,800 of these "superfluous eaters"—men whom the rest of the world considered Germany's best sons. Hitler's terror has driven 80,000 additional "superfluous eaters" across Germany's frontiers into exile. Another 80,000 are internal emigres, men and women who continue to live in Germany, but are hounded by the Nazi terror into a continuous flight from place to place. Most of these "superfluous eaters" often have no more than a crust of dry bread with which to stay their hunger. About 120,000 "superfluous eaters" have been thrown into jails and concentration camps of the Third Reich, where they receive barely enough to keep them alive. The families of these political prisoners receive no relief or winter aid of any kind. Their existence depends literally upon the assistance of the anti-fascists inside and outside Germany.

The murder and starvation of Germany's progressive people is one method by which Hitler seeks to "solve" the food problem. For the 65,000,000 Germans who have not been killed, exiled or interned, the Chancellor has another "solution," announced just one year ago at the opening of the great automobile show. On that occasion, Hitler admitted that, thanks to the Nazi war preparations, the German people were literally starving.

"There is a lot of truth," the Chancellor said, "in the reports of the foreign correspondents about hungry and ragged Germany and about the shortage of butter, oleomargarine and pork."

More cars, Hitler said in so many words, "would prompt the people to spend more money for the pleasure of riding in an automobile and less for the pleasure of eating."

Eating is officially declared a "pleasure" for people who lack the barest necessities of life. For the "superfluous eaters" it is a deadly sin.

The cynical irony of Hitler's advice to the starving German people becomes clear when we consider current wages. According to official Nazi figures, 3,300,000 employed workers are earning about $3.50 a week (8.41 marks). Another 500,000 workers average about $5 a week (12.80 marks). Over 50 percent of Germany's employes earn less than $40 a month (100 marks); about 30 percent earn $40 a month; and only 20 percent earn more than that sum. It is these underpaid and underfed people of Germany that Hitler urges to eat less and ride more.

This advice, however, has its serious as well as its ironical side. The campaign for more automobiles is part of the Nazi program for the motorization of Germany with the next war in mind. It is extremely significant that in the same speech Hitler raised the slogan "more cars" and the slogan "new land." The Chancellor stated specifically that Germany's food problem can be solved only by the acquisition of more territory.

New land means war. The Nazi dictatorship admits that it cannot feed the German people by peaceful methods. As soon as it is fully prepared, it is ready to drag the whole world into a sanguinary conflict. Nor have the Nazis concealed the specific "new land" which they have in mind. In the political testament *Mein Kampf,* Hitler clearly indicated the Soviet Ukraine.

Such are the net results of the Hitler dictatorship. Three years after the burning of the Reichstag, der Fuehrer has only two solutions for universal starvation: eat less and ride more; to eat at all, arm for war.

Significantly enough, Hitler's bombast at the automobile show completely ignored the discontent which is spreading throughout Germany. The Chancellor, naturally, had nothing to say about the growing United Front between the Socialists and the Communists who are now vigorously preparing for the shop committee election which will take place in March. They have already obtained renewed strength in the Nazi factories. In some cities the United Front has reached the point where Catholics have joined Socialists and Communists in the struggle against fascism.

Indeed, the silence of the Nazi dictatorship has now become more significant than its loquacity. Joseph Goebbels yells long and loud, but he hasn't even peeped about the widespread battle for the liberation of Ernst Thaelmann, Karl von Ossietzky and others, languishing in Nazi dungeons since the Reichstag fire.

The fascist silence is futile. Today the name of Ernst Thaelmann has become a symbol

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the world over for the people's struggle against fascist barbarism, for peace, freedom and culture. Nor can the Nazis obscure the brilliant names of Ossietzky, now a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize.

It has now become evident to all progressive people that the liberation of Thaelmann, Ossietzky, Mierendorff and the thousands upon thousands of the other political prisoners in Germany is no longer the concern of the German people alone, but must be the concern of all mankind.

The Nazis have many reasons for forgetting the burning of the Reichstag. The progressive men and women of the world have every reason to remember it with fury and indignation. I know of no better way to mark this lawless assault upon the freedom of the German people than to demand the liberation of those who champion that freedom.

Our Readers' Forum

Josephine Herbst Protests

Dear Mike:

I think your review of the Partisan Review and Anvil is full of contradictions. It seems to me obviously an excuse to attack James Farrell. The amount of space given to this attacks in proportion to the balance of the review gives the show away. It is one of the most unjustifiable and ill judged attacks I have read. No one doubts your revolutionary intentions or ardor. But literature must be judged with the head as well as the bowels. Your anti-intellectualism has bothered me for a long time. It seems to me that in attempting to oversimplify everything, trying to glorify sweat and song, you are issuing to yourself one of Lenin's "certificates of mental poverty." Your fine sounding robust phrases against ossification of thought conceal carelessness and helplessness in the development of ideas. The contradiction between your good intentions and what you achieve in a piece of this kind is appalling. While accusing Farrell of subjectivism you permit your own reply to become completely subjective. You dismiss Farrell's books with the word "soulless" at the same time that you condemn Farrell for crushing other writers with a phrase. Although the review is ostensibly a critical piece you dismiss with a line the writing of Dos Passos, Malraux and Ben Field. In assuming that Arvin's statement concerning criticism is correct without any qualifying analysis, you again betray an anti-intellectual attitude that succeeds in substituting statement for reasoned conclusions. You seem to have made yourself a watchdog for strictly working-class writing. One can appreciate your response to the vital subject matter of writers like Conroy and Weatherwax without understanding your prevailing inhospitality to professional writers who have been drawn to the left. Your review confronts us with the problem of attempting to form a wide united front at the same time that an avowed sympathizer, a man of evident intellectual integrity and attainments, is attacked for opinions not enthusiastic enough to suit you. If we are to compel our writers to the left to chant the same song our ranks will thin, not gain recruits that is certain and in the process we shall have bankrupted the intellectual integrity of the cultural movement. Your exception to Farrell's review of the Weatherwax book in The Herald-Tribune seems to me not wisely taken. The review did not attack revolutionary writing. On the contrary, Farrell praised revolutionary writing. On the subject of the Weatherwax book any serious writer or critic should be as eligible to an opinion as yourself. This letter is by no means a discussion of the merits of any of the writings under consideration. Without in the least giving a blanket approval of Farrell's review of Clifford Odets' play, I believe his right to his opinion is necessary to fight for.

Your own opinion might sound as though it were an official pronunciomento of the movement. We know, of course, that this is not your intention, and that the revolutionary movement has no official spokesman in literature. Because of your long association with revolutionary writing and your considerable influence on readers, your opinions are often taken as authoritative statements rather than the expression of one critic among many. For this reason, Mike, you more than anybody else should take extreme pains to avoid giving that impression.

JOSEPHINE HERBST.

Michael Gold Replies

Dear Jo Herbst:

I am sorry if my review of the new magazine, *Partisan-Anvil,* looked to you like nothing better than an alibi for attacking James Farrell. In reviewing magazines or anthologies, the best anyone can do is to try to cover a few items that appeal to his temperament. A seriatim review would give only a short line to each item, and be boring. Besides, if I wanted only to attack Farrell, I could have done it without any alibi.

It seems to me truer to say that Farrell left the path of authentic criticism. He was entitled to his opinion on Odets' play, but not to make an unforgiveable personal attack on Odets before saying a word about the play itself. I did not go out of my way to attack Farrell, but to defend Odets and all our revolutionary writing against this.

There should be, and generally has been, the utmost freedom of mutual self-criticism among the revolutionary writers, when the discussion is conducted on the plane of principles. But when a critic goes out of his way, like Farrell, to charge another revolutionary writer with being swell-headed, inflated, press-agented, fame-hungry, a self-constituted "white hope" of revolutionary literature, etc., as Farrell sneers at Odets, it is time to protest.

In the past five years I don't think you can name a single bit of left criticism that had the sharp personal tone of Farrell's review. That kind of mutual slaughter died long ago, with all other sectarianism, and I for one, am sore that it should be revived. Was Farrell's review of Odets a serious piece of intellectual analyis, the kind of thing you say you want? No, it wasn't; it was a long and elaborate sneer, and if you re-read it I think you will agree with me.

This is my opinion, and surely I had as much right to express it as Farrell had to attack Odets. If you think I grew too personal, I think the fault lies with the provoker of such personal feelings.

It is true I am prejudiced in favor of proletarian literature. It is closer to me, and I think it still an unexplored field for writers. Does this make me anti-intellectual? Does this make me esteem any the less the work of a Malraux or Andre Gide, the researches of Kenneth Burke and Edmund Wilson, the poetry of Kenneth Fearing or Horace Gregory? Of course not; but is it a crime to feel more at home with Jack Conroy, as I do? It may be a limitation; and I do not deny it is, but all of us are humanly limited, and should respect each other's limitations, and try to utilize them for the great cause all of us serve.

This admission, it seems to me, answers your suggestion that any opinion of mine "sounds as though it were an official pronunciamento." I have never written, I hope, in the tone of a bureaucrat; I certainly don't feel like a pope or pedant, and if ever I do get that way, please shoot me as you would a worn-out horse. No critic has ever been authorized in the field of revolutionary literature to hand down "official" verdicts. This is a world of opinion and controversy and experiment; it is an unfinished world, and there are no dogmas. At the same time, each participant should defend the truth that's in him as vigorously as possible without personal feeling; and I hope I will always have the right to do that with the same freedom as yourself and that nobody will accuse us of being dogmatists and "artists in uniform" for daring to be as passionate about revolutionary literature as Flaubert, Gautier or even James Branch Cabell have been about the ivory tower literature.

MICHAEL GOLD.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Here Are the Answers

EIGHTEEN YEARS ago, as a new-fledged adult, considering it my duty to the community of which I had just become a legal entity to learn something about its politics, I visited Republican and Democratic clubs and the local Socialist branch. At the clubs it took persuasion to draw the hangers on—there was no way of differentiating between officials and visitors since all were equally at ease—into useful conversation. Some bored chaps desultorily hunted but could not find for me copies of their platforms and were, in fact, mystified by the request for them. They would mail them to me if I left my address: in the meanwhile wouldn't I look at the social room, see the billiard table, the card tables, slide my foot along the dance floor? Wouldn't I come to the Saturday night dances where I would meet "nice" people, just my type?

At the Socialist branch—the Communist Party, which I may say from experience has kept the best Socialist features while getting rid of some of the others, was not then in existence in America—I had only to breathe a hint that I was interested, to have my arms heaped with literature, to be solicited to join classes at the Rand School, to be asked, immediately, if I cared to do some work. In a week I was putting leaflets in letter boxes.

Fifteen years later I was sitting with a group of writers and editorial workers from magazine and book-publishing houses in a restaurant patronized by the literati. I had long ago turned from the faction-clouded and, to me then, incomprehensible political revolutionary movement to the simpler literary "revolution" which concerned itself with easily understandable issues like the right to use certain four-letter words. Lately, however, the political revolutionary movement had begun to intrude. It broke into the headlines and it broke, also, into our conversation. At this particular luncheon there was talk of a Communist demonstration where people had been clubbed and ridden down. We said "exhibitionists" and smiled; we said "martyr complex" and smiled. We hoped that by these subtle words the disturbance would be charmed away. We tried to explain away Communists in the Freudian vocabulary still fashionable in literary circles, as "repressed" people "sublimating" in mass action and "compensating" for their "sense of inferiority" by sticking their heads out to the policemen's clubs. We drew a New Yorkerish picture of the happy victims turning grateful smiles upon the cops just before their eyes glazed with unconsciousness. There were eight people at that lunch table. Of the eight all but one are, today, Communists or sympathizers.

I have permitted myself this diversion into autobiography because I think it illustrates some of the outstanding characteristics of a revolutionary party, specifically of the Communist Party and of the impression it makes.

First, it has ideas and a program, unlike the intellectually-dead "regular" parties which have an interest rather in concealing their programs. Second, it is a party, every member of which does work, organizing in his shop, recruiting, etc., etc. Third, this activity, so upsetting to the community of passives which American centers had become, at first irritates but, in the long run, wins confidence and respect. Increasingly in times of crisis, groups throughout the country, facing the necessity for action, have recalled the activity, courage and devotion of the Communists and have turned to them voluntarily for leadership. That is why although numerically at any given moment the Communists may be vastly outnumbered by sporadic and amorphous movements like the Townsend Plan and Coughlin's League for Social Justice, Communists make the strongest and most enduring impression; why the hatred of the bourgeoisie is concentrated against them; why unorganized elements within the masses turn to "red" organizations in spite of the bitter propaganda against them; and, finally, why there is so great a curiosity about them.

There have been many books and pamphlets written to satisfy this curiosity. Strachey's *The Coming Struggle for Power* has deservedly had a wide appeal and a powerful influence upon intellectuals and professionals. Olgin's pamphlet *Why Communism,* of which several hundred thousand copies have been distributed, is a model of forceful pamphleteering. The reprints of works by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin have had incalculable influence. And a vast number of pamphlets have impressed, often very ably, the Communist point of view on specific current issues.

It seems to me, however, that for the American situation at this moment Earl Browder's new book, *What Is Communism?*[1] serves this important purpose better than any other that I know of. Because of its approach it can be read by any section of the population, where Strachey's book appeals more directly to intellectuals. It is authoritative in a solider way than any other. It is authoritative, not merely because the author speaks as the Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States, but because it is written from a lifelong study and practice of Marxist political science and equally from a lifelong, intimate and active knowledge of the American scene. The sense of the book's authority grows upon the reader, not from any formidable apparatus of statistics and documentation but from the balance, logic and flow of the argument, the unassertive decision and quiet reasonableness of its manner. It is a simplified, but nowhere vulgarized, representation of the Communist viewpoint. It uses a plain, at times colloquial diction; but its simplicity does not derive merely from its vocabulary, but from the directness, force and logic of the presentation. Only a writer in complete possession of his material and with a complete understanding of his audience could command such "simplicity." Nor is there, anywhere, that impatience and arrogance which has sometimes characterized the Communist in his relations with the vaccilating; neither is there anywhere hesitation or compromise. Rarely are all these qualities to be found together in one writer; they have been present in all of Earl Browder's writing and public utterance; they are here in this book.

I have given my comments the title *Here Are the Answers* and, in fact, this is the intention of the book—to answer those questions that are most frequently and most repeatedly asked by people approaching Communism. Some of the chapters, in a less completed form, appeared originally in THE NEW MASSES and were arranged to give authoritative answers to questions persistently asked by our readers.

The appearance of a book like this in which a Communist leader addresses himself directly to the entire American public, openly and specifically answering questions about, and charges against, his party, unhesitatingly taking up "dangerous" questions and doing so without equivocation, is in itself a sign of the new status of the movement in America.

[1] *What Is Communism?*, by Earl Browder. Vanguard Press. Cloth, $2.00; paper, $.50.

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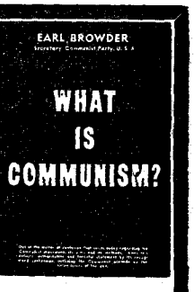

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The Communist Party by this, among other significant indications, is no longer a rumored about, disturbing "sect." Even in the uneasy judgment of its enemies, it has become a political force listened to by organized labor, by the disestablished middle class and farmers. No longer, as once used to be said, does the party "speak to itself." The dignity and poised assurance of this book is in itself a symbol of its political maturity.

In form, as I have mentioned before, the book is a series of answers to often posed questions. It takes up some twenty specific questions in turn. They include such superficially diverse questions as "Who Are the Americans?" "Can the Workers Lead a People's Movement?" and the issues involved in the Negro problem. They are all, however, carefully integrated; they all lead to two main issues—the danger of reaction in America and the measures that can defeat it. That this danger is immediate and that reaction is organizing its forces now and must be met now, is made starkly clear in the book. None reading it, whatever reservations he may make in other respects, can question this. The pressing necessity for organizing a People's Front against reaction and in defense of the democratic rights of the American people is made dramatically plain. Equally clear is the need of a Farmer-Labor party as its essential political insrument.

Like other Marxist literature this book differs from the usual political discussion in that it does not leave the reader merely "informed." It is, at the same time, a call to action. It analyzes the immediate situation; it answers the immediate question. The question having been answered action must follow. So forceful and convincing is this book that I cannot see how it can leave any serious reader with any remaining intellectual warrant for inaction. The book makes clear that the only choice is action or surrender. In that respect the book will be dangerous not only to reactionaries but to those live-and-let-live gentlemen who would like to "keep out of it." It *must* lead to taking a stand. But if they read the book sensitively they may conclude, also, that taking a stand may reanimate life for them in a way not to be achieved by any other means.

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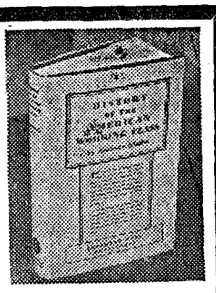

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Outside the Home Office

INSIDE EUROPE, by John Gunther. Harper & Bros. $3.50.

NOTHING in decades has enraged the American newspaper publishing fraternity so much as Heywood Broun's revival of the charge, almost as old as commercial newspapers themselves, that a large part of journalism ethically is no better than prostitution. And upon this fiery indignation dynamite has been thrown by recently organized newspaper men who have committed the strange sin of asking for better wages, shorter hours, better social conditions and other vulgar things which none but working people usually demand. And so today the battle for social security is on and the success of the American Newspaper Guild, according to President Broun, will forever end the taunt of journalistic prostitution.

The discovery of economic forces, the development perhaps of a social conscience by the news writers of America is, in my opinion, one of the most important quiet happenings of our age, a real sign of the temper of our times and a prophetic one.

Newspaper men assigned to European posts while not necessarily a breed superior to that in the home office (many of us were just plain accidents and not fortunate ones at that) could, however, boast the freedom from the demoralizing and corrupting forces which so completely rule a large majority of the journals of the world.

No foreign correspondent I know received daily directions on how to color news, what to suppress, what to play up and more important still, there was no intimidation, nor that repressive atmosphere which so frequently fools men into believing they are breathing the air of freedom. (It's the invisible, the odorless poison gas which is the more deadly.) After all, Mr. Sheehan of The Chicago Tribune and the N.A.N.A. was merely told to go and have adventures. Duranty of The Times was warned not to quote the Soviet press but otherwise left alone to wrestle with the truth. (Of course the sending of Duranty was an act of penance on the part of a great newspaper caught in journalistic delicto); Chamberlain of The Christian Science Monitor reported favorably on Soviet Russia for years, then unfavorably, without orders to change his mind, and even Mr. Hearst's Lindsay Parrott, uninstructed by the home office, spilled many of his boss's red beans by making a statement that no famine existed in the Ukraine at a time when the Hearst press was running honest-to-goodness photographs (only thirteen years old) showing its progress in 1935.

The freedom which foreign correspondents have enjoyed has not necessarily led them all to exercise it.

Some have taken their legion of honor ribbons seriously and more than one has accepted Mussolini's thirty thousand pieces of silver. But generally speaking the American press corps in Europe deserves credit for the fundamental virtues—honesty, integrity, truthfulness, etc., which are the main part of the newspaper publishers' code of ethics and the least observed.

As the protagonist of the fundamental virtues I would like to propose my friend John Gunther, for many years Chicago Daily News correspondent in Central Europe, magazine contributor and novelist. I do not know what orders Colonel Knox, the present publisher of the paper, sends to his representatives abroad, but under the Lawson regime The Daily News men were as free as The Manchester Guardian corps and the result was the most intelligent reporting from Europe in the American press.

Of course when it comes to publishing journalism in a magazine and finally in a book the last barriers, actual and mental, disappear and the result is works like *Personal History, I Write as I Please* and *Inside Europe*.

Gunther combines journalistic talent for exposing the vital, the fascinating and the most interesting with a brilliant novelist's style and an extremely intelligent historian's interpretation. *Inside Europe* has been called a Baedecker to present-day politics, but, thank heaven, it is neither as statistical nor as ob-

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jective as a travel guide. It is a handbook which includes a behind-the-scenes merry-go-round of leaders and events, replete with humorous incident and even apocryphal stories which time may prove the most authoritative keys to the character of kings, premiers, presidents and dictators and the march of happenings.

Take for example the first seven chapters, 102 pages, devoted to Hitler-Germany. From 1920 to 1930 I was a Berlin correspondent and from 1930 on I have read quite a lot of books and papers and confidential reports out of Germany. I thought therefore that the first quarter of the book would have nothing new for me, but I swear it was the most interesting. In fact the retelling of the whole story of the rise of Hitler, the Reichstag fire, the Blood Purge, the persecution of the Jews, is so brilliant, so well written, so properly emphasized, so illuminated with intelligent explanation, that it is probably the most valuable part of the book.

The Vienna chapters, with the account of the Nazi Putsch and the death of Dollfuss, show that Mr. Gunther can tell a thrilling story in fine narrative style and weave into it unpublished disclosures of a most sensational nature. In fact throughout the chapters on Italy, England, the Balkans, Czechoslovakia and Russia there are hundreds of little known facts, anecdotes, stories which might have been censored if sent by cable, as well as straight historical recapitulation.

In a foreword Mr. Gunther says that "this book is written from a definite point of view. It is that the accidents of personality play a great role in history. . . . The personality of Karl Marx himself has powerfully influenced the economic interpretation of history. Important political, religious, nationalist, as well as economic factors are not, I believe, neglected in this book. But its main trend is personal." The question of supermen imposing their will on history cannot be discussed here, but the suggestion at least can be offered that Mussolini was third choice for the "march" on Rome and that D'Annunzio or Garibaldi would have established a Blackshirt dictatorship in 1922 if either had accepted the military junta's offer. And will Mr. Gunther please name the hero-leader of the Kiel fleet who started the German revolution in 1918?

However, the accent on personality has added to the readability of the book and neither the thesis, nor the Stekelian interpretation of dictatorship as a father substitute or authority complex, nor the captions "Lavalu-ation" and "Duranty's Inferno" for chapters on France and Russia respectively, should influence you toward or away from this book. It is so darn good that these matters will not hurt even if you are offended by them.

Knowing the author personally I think I know where he stands politically, but this also should be judged from his public declaration. Neutral and objective as a newspaper correspondent, he shows himself in his book to be intensely anti-fascist. You will not be able to read his chapters on Hitler, Dollfuss and Mussolini without experiencing the same horror and disgust which the author felt as he reported the history of fascism in Europe. At the head of his chapters on Russia Mr. Gunther puts Stalin's words: "No revolution can be made with silk gloves" and the concluding words of the whole book are quite significant. After quoting Louis Fischer's brilliant remark that "it is easier to shake the world in ten days than to remold it in fifteen years," he adds that

> Russia is not a Communist state yet; it is not even a socialist state. It is very far from having produced a classless society. But the advances, both in pointing the way to socialism, and in achieving stability politically, have been enormous. Give Russia ten years of peace, and it will be the most powerful country in the world.

Mr. Gunther, you see, takes the long view. It is the only honest view to take. The foreign correspondent, as I have tried to say, is generally lucky that he can either write without a viewpoint or take an honest one when intelligence and reason as well as emotion lead him there. The trouble with the world press is the short view—the view the anti-labor, anti-liberal, power or profit-worshipping publisher generally forces upon newspaper men.

GEORGE SELDES.

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They Find Strength

TO MY CONTEMPORARIES, by Edwin Rolfe. Dynamo Publishers. $1.

EDWIN ROLFE'S volume of verse is one of many adumbrations of a new poetic renaissance in America. His title indicates a sense of solidarity with his contemporaries in revolutionary literature which is indispensable for a poetic movement, as distinguished from the lone singing of the isolated poet. The verses themselves have a strong personal quality which shines through the social themes now common to a large group of American writers.

Rolfe's Argument, the Argument, too, of his contemporaries, emerges with rare clarity and emotion in the poem which opens the volume:

> To welcome multitudes—the miracle of deeds
> performed in unison—the mind
> must first renounce the fiction of the self
> and its vainglory. It must pierce
> the dreamplate of its solitude, the fallacy
> of its omnipotence, the fairytale
> aprilfools recurring every day
> in speeches of professors and politicians.
> It must learn
> the wisdom and the strength and the togetherness
> of bodies phalanxed in a common cause,
> of fists tight-clenched around a crimson banner
> flying in the wind above a final, fierce
> life-and-death fight against a common foe.
>
> Emerging then, the withered land will grow
> —purged—in a new florescence; only then,
> cleansed of all chaos, a race of men may know
> abundance, life, fecundity.

This is a serene lyric animated by faith in the workers' struggle for a socialist society. It gives poetic reality to the central idea of the revolutionary movement; and gives it, moreover, with freshness of phrase, melody and irresistible feeling.

You may, if you are so inclined, find here or there the formal influence of T. S. Eliot, whom few of the younger poets have wholly escaped. Yet essentially Rolfe's poem is antithesis to the Wasteland, a wholesome break from everything for which the last of the bourgeois romantics stands for. The land is indeed withered, but we need not dig our

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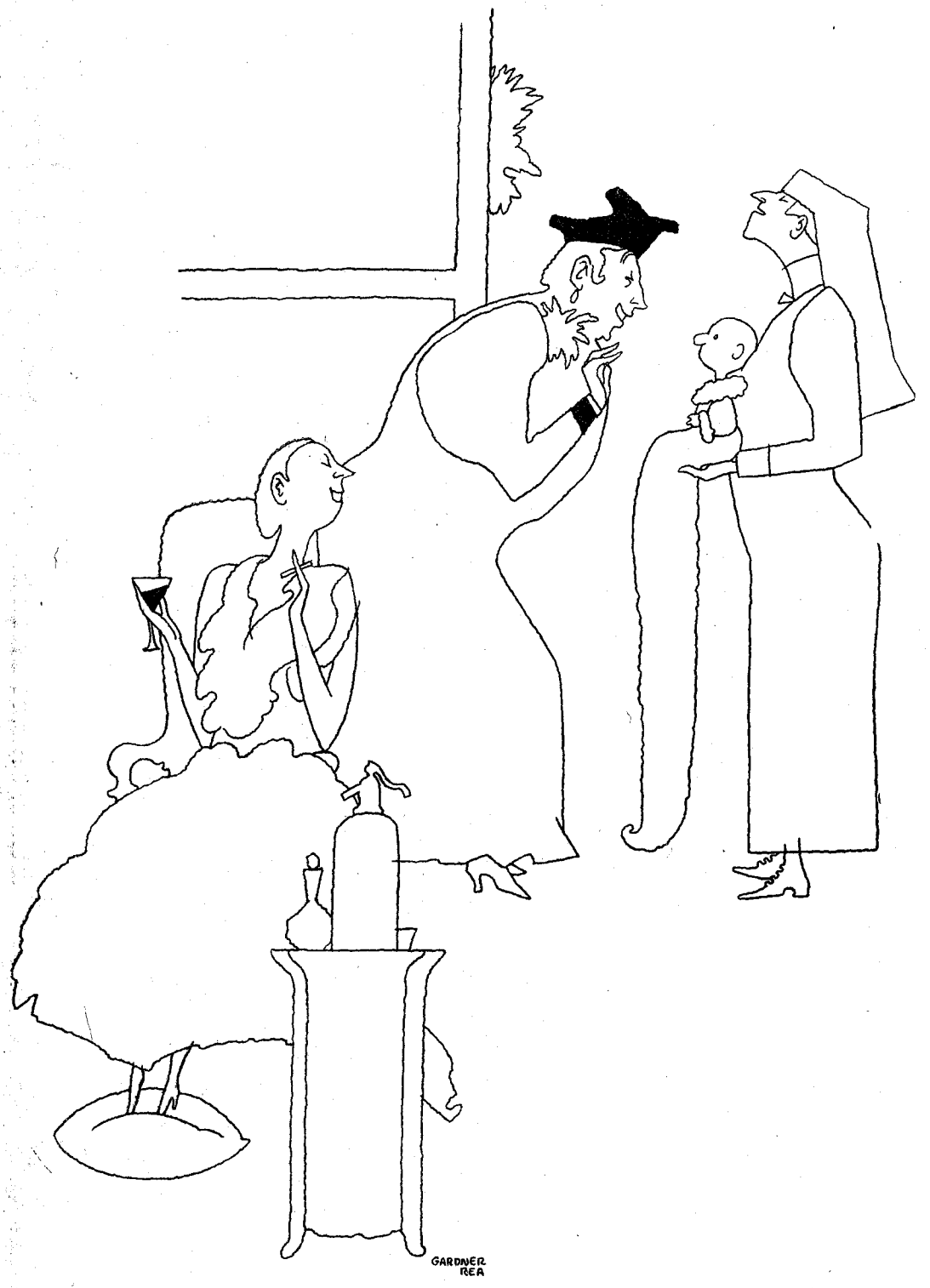

"And such a beautiful aristocratic nose! Just like J. P. Morgan's!" *Gardner Rea*

heads into our souls, nor need we crawl back along the dark alleyways of time into the arms of the church. Chaos can be cleansed through deeds performed in unison around a crimson banner; that way lies fecundity, abundance, life.

One of those who are creating a new literature, vigorous in every land where the workers are awake, Edwin Rolfe repudiates the cult of the ego inherited from the French Revolution, and gathers strength from the collective vision and energy of which the October Revolution is the great contemporary symbol. The poet is conscious of the important alternative of our day. He invokes "the winds blowing from the east and the voices wafted with them, the voices attendant on the spheres in which we too shall inevitably whirl." And he knows when those winds begin blowing in the west. Himself the product of the American revolutionary movement, he understand the workers with profound love, not pity. He is aware that proletarians are "not completely broken, ready to fall back into the earth." Has he not heard the men in the brickyards above the Hudson singing "slow, beautiful and melodious as the river"? The songs are sad "outlets for a million pains; sad, but soaring in the night and powerful." And he knows something even more meaningful: the workers, bending under heavy burdens, utter two words, a beginning: "Some day . . ."

You read this moving lyric and Rolfe's literary derivations are of secondary importance. These are transcended by his living derivations. His strength comes chiefly from his identification with the workers about whom he writes.

> A heavy rope is flung into the skies,
> a heavy rope hangs tautly from a tree,
> a black man strangles above a sea of eyes,
> The black man looks like me.

The identification embraces every worker of whom the poet sings—Negro and white, German, Mexican, Russian, North American. It is authentic in the Leipzig court-room, in the Red Square, in Kentucky and Georgia and Fourteenth Street. But this is not that abstract earthlessness which some critics profess to find in communist poets. Rolfe is deeply attached to his own land which the revolutionary loves without the murk of chauvinism.

> **This is our land, we planted its first seed!**
> **These are our mines, our hands dig the coal!**
> **These roads are ours, the wires across the land are ours! THIS IS OUR EARTH!**

With this viewpoint to orient him in a world of mechanical speed and social conflict; with a sure command of his craft, and with a strong poetic emotion which no mere skill can substitute, Rolfe stands out as one of the ablest of the younger poets writing in English today. His Homage to Karl Marx reveals a gift for expressing abstract ideas lyrically; his poems about unit meetings of the Communist Party, among the first of their kind in this country, display the true poet's capacity for grasping and transmitting the general through the specific.

The poet, of course, has the defects of his virtues. He pays for clarity and melodiousness by occasional overwriting, looseness of phrase, cliches. Intent upon pouring out every drop of feeling which an event or idea generates in him, he sometimes neglects that compression which gives poetry its greatest tension and power. Perhaps this is because he writes too easily and too much. Yet this lax fecundity is not, at this moment, altogether a defect. Rolfe often sings superfluously, but he sings—and well. In one of its aspects, this is a healthy corrective to the emotional sterility of the late Twenties, when much of the fashionable verse was squeezed into compact little tablets like Bovril. Water breaking through a dam rushes out violently; after the barriers over which our revolutionary poets have had to leap, it is not hard to see why they should sing with abandon, a rarer quality these days than mechanical discipline.

Rolfe's volume is a significant achievement in contemporary American poetry and a pledge of something more. The younger revolutionary writers have consciously set themselves the task of transcending their initial accomplishments. Boldly, the poet calls upon his contemporaries to enter into the farthest regions of space and time; but soon this cosmic vision settles down to our own space and our own time. You are to move

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across today's America, blueprint the hills and rivers, mark the meadows and factories, harness the bankers and bosses and kings and presidents,

> sweep them together and tie their hands
> with their servile strings and ticker tape,
> and lead the parasite pulp with you
> to moldy manors and somnolent suburbs
> into the dead lands, beyond the outposts
> of workingmen marching. Then lock the doors
> and destroy the keys. Leave them to die.

Return, then, to cities where the wind finds chasms between skyscrapers, where men reveal their thoughts in action, where mills and factories are continual testament to the war that only villages can hide:

> and synthesize
> these memories within the single self
> attendant on the mass of men
> who march with us today, who blaze the way
> from village to city, from city to the world
> our minds foresee, our poems celebrate.

To speak with that vivid assurance is to have found strength where alone it may be found today. What was only yesterday a painful attempt to fuse general idea with sensuous experience and personal emotion, is now integrated poetry. Better still, Rolfe and his contemporaries march with their eyes on the farthest horizon. Occasionally, the confusion of our epoch and their own inexperience compels their gaze to waver. Then, like so many of our contemporaries in literature, they turn to each other in parochial admiration as the vanguard of a procession that includes millions; they look so long and so fondly at each other that the millions fade from view, and only the poets themselves remain.

In that sense the last poem in Rolfe's book contradicts the first. Possibly the fiction of the self and its vainglory and the fallacy of its omnipotence are too old to be abrogated in a day by lyrical fiat. Possibly the fury of the moment and the politics of literature were permitted, thoughtlessly, to triumph over that objectivity of vision which is the essence of true poetry. If so, Rolfe as editor committed an injustice against Rolfe as poet; for the volume as a whole voices the poet's will to march with the millions, to celebrate their advance in verse worthy of its theme.

JOSEPH FREEMAN

In Brief Review

AROUND THE WORLD WITH THE ALPHABET, by Hendrik Van Loon. (*Simon and Schuster.* $1.) Poor Uncle Willem, for so many years he has taken the kiddies on conducted tours all over everything and been well paid for it, and now the world and history have lost their geniality. It is by turns a resigned and petulant Uncle Willem who goes hoarsely through his travelogue in this alphabet book with a famous city for each capital letter. Under B we don't get Berlin but Borobodur, a dead city in a Dutch East Indian jungle, famous for Buddhist statuary. Uncle Willem sighs over the restfulness of Buddhism, hands a fig leaf to Dutch imperialism and shuts the page. Under R there's Rome all right, but not a word about fascism. Under M there is Moscow, and Mr. Van Loon's pen suddenly becomes energetic. It is dipped in spleen, and repeats the dreary little libel of fatigued and forgetful liberals about the Soviet system being Czarism in a new edition. Peace be with dear old Uncle Willem and may he find his well earned rest in a nice Buddhist monastery, where the monks all run to the same fatness of figure and head as he has become famous for.

I. S.

UNDERGROUND IN ILLINOIS, by 100 Coal Miners and Richard Stockton. (*National Research League.* 5c.) This pamphlet might serve as a model for what such publications should be like. It brilliantly reviews the living conditions of the Illinois miners and their families; it recounts with great fulness the circumstances under which they labor, and the situation in the coal industry; it encourages with its account of the militant attitude common among the sons of miners, and the Y.C.L.'s influence among them; it describes the progressive stand maintained by Lewis in fighting the red-scare and in behalf of strong industrial unions; it reviews the history and struggles of their union; it estimates the oppressive Keck machinery; it argues the great need of a Farmer-Labor party; it analyzes the part women have played and can play in the fight of their men. In short, it contains 32 pages full of information, both descriptive and statistical; and it will provide a liberal education for the reader unfamiliar with how miners "live, work, and struggle for unity."

TONY CLARK.

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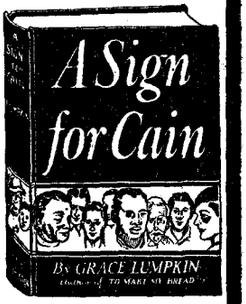

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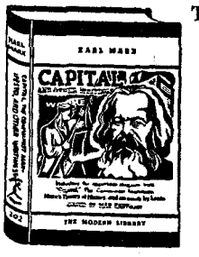

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The Theater

Subsistence Love: British Style

WHEN *Love on the Dole* opened last January in London the experts said it might last two weeks, then curl up and die. Nobody imagined it would run for a year and carry two road companies at the same time and even cross the ocean for an American tour. It is true that all kinds of people, including high clerics, Members of Parliament and the moneyed gentlemen, sat through the play despite twinges of discomfort; but certainly not for its high drama; nor that it was a *succès de scandale,* nor that it taught lessons on which the stolid could lovingly beam. Here was a complete break with the drawing-room-and-mantelpiece stuff which had monopolized the London stage. Here, at least, were real people, suffering, menacing people; slightly Dickensian, perhaps, but flesh-and-blood English men and women who represented not only the million-and-a-half employables (kept this side of starvation at huge governmental cost) but the vastly more numerous others on a pauper's level—totaling nearly a third of the population.

Love on the Dole was not merely an evening's entertainment; it was something of a national case history. To us in America, of course, it can hardly give the shock it gave Londoners, whose theater is always subject to the Lord Chamberlain's approval, and who had never seen a *Waiting for Lefty.* To a country blemished with Hoovervilles, sharecropper misery and widespread economic suffering there is nothing foreign in this British picture of proletarian misery. But *Love on the Dole* doesn't create international character types; it is specifically British in writing and production.

Against a mill-town background *Love on the Dole* (Shubert Theater) follows the life of a typical working-class family. Henry Hardcastle is unemployed like four-fifths of the men in his town; but his son works as an apprentice, his daughter Sal has a job. Miserable in a world of "poverty, pawnshops, dirt and drink," the older Hardcastles cling to their respectability while waiting for trade to "turn corners." But their children writhe impatiently, each wanting to marry. A weekly income of $9 doesn't discourage Sal; it is Larry who winces at the prospect of poverty souring their love. He rages against their predicament. "You're in a racket but on the wrong end," he deflates the eager apprentice, in an attempt to drill class-consciousness into his brains; but with no more effect that he has on Sal. Her driving hope momentarily frees him from his need to fight for the workers; but even while he proclaims: "We are two prisoners on a ticket of leave, you and me, and to hell with the others," he is haunted by the deeper loyalty.

By Act II their jobs have been taken, their love weighed down by the burden of waiting. Marriage is unthinkable: a license at $1.50 is a fantastic luxury to people who pawn a pipe for six cents. But suffering has not driven her to share Larry's devotion to their class. And when he is killed in a demonstration she does not emerge from stunned bereavement to avenge him. With supreme cynicism she becomes the mistress of a racketeer whom she despises. But the Hardcastles will no longer need the dole.

The play makes one feel, in general, that the authors know British working-class conditions. And their script has been helped by two really fine actors (Wendy Hiller, Alexander Grandison in particular). Which would promise a good deal. But one's pleasure is constantly broken; and for obvious reasons. The second act, for instance, meanders half-heartedly, never widening the limits defined in Act I. Its pace is slow—so slow that the final act seems to fly at febrile speed. Some of the scenes are solidly built, others pasted together. And one thirsts for some freshness in the dialog. But the most striking difficulty is Larry, who as a characterization makes an undistinguished pulp of impulses. He is killed attempting to "save" a demonstration from the tactical stupidity of a fanatic. Why the factional fight? A man killed by a police attack on demonstrators is not exactly unknown in 1936. By suddenly shoving in a cardboard revolutionist in an extraneous struggle, the writer turns the hero into a synthetic martyr.

There are other irritations: the Dickensian whimsy inevitably tagged on to the three tippling crones; the lovers' holiday scene: a promising variant of the Rupert Brooke "we flung ourselves upon a windy hill" which doesn't come off. Yet one goes from this clumsy play with a sharp residue of feeling. Perhaps, because the last scenes are the most exciting and the most meaningful. Offhand the prostitution-ending seems just another version of a weary device. But it is hardly a tricky escape from anti-climax. Sal was as bored by Larry's class-consciousness at the end as she was at the beginning. To have made her into a militant would have been a lie. Her choice lay between continued misery-and-respectability or its opposite. Of course few proletarians are invited to become the whore of a Sam Grundy; but by allowing her this action, the playwright sharply underscores the meaning. The Hardcastles will keep body and soul together at the sacrifice of their last possession: respectability. A worn play device suddenly acquires new meaning. Cynicism emerges as something more than itself: an intensifying glass through which economic-and-human degradation burns an accusing light. STANLEY BURNSHAW.

A New Strike Play

THE first proletarian dramatists performed feats of pioneering in even stating their themes in intelligible terms to an audience which neither sympathized nor understood them fully. Their first test was to win over the audience. The new revolutionary theater may now choose and develop many and various themes in a deeper and more artistic form, for this new audience which along with the new playwright is creating the new theater.

But it is well to remember that new culture is still in its first development; its forms are still undefined. There remains outside of it a vast world of which the Broadway and movie audience is typical. Hence the propaganda play has not lost any of its original validity and importance. It has merely been supplemented by a new kind.

Michael Blankfort's play, *The Crime,* is directed exclusively to the new audience in the theater. It is a step in the direction of a new American working class theater. It takes the sympathy of the audience for granted and wastes no time in trying to win it over. Actual material from recent strikes in Sioux Falls, S. D., and Omaha, Neb., has been used to weave the action. There seems, however, some uncertainty on the playwright's part as to how this material should be employed most effectively. The intention gleaned from the program, which states that the action may take place "in any town of 25,000 anywhere in the U.S.A. today" points to an expressionist drama with a universal theme and characters that are typical rather than particular individuals. The direction of the play, in which the scenes are often blocked in with light on a darkened stage, seems to confirm this. In such a play the audience should experience the action entirely from the viewpoint of the main protagonist—in this case, Pete Broyler, president of local 315. The loose action, with little plot development makes this character the play's binding force.

Yet we never participate fully in Pete's struggles or in the conflict between his loyalty to the A.F. of L. union leader and his instinctive solidarity with the militant workers out of which the plot develops. The single scenes do not achieve that universal application, which, for instance, made Brecht's *Mother* so moving an agitational work. If we could identify ourselves fully with Pete, we would feel the tragic conflict in all its impact and not merely realize intellectually that the strike hinges on him, and that his crime is that he listens to the non-resistance labor tactics of Donahue, the

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A.F. of L., leader and breaks the militant spirit of the workers. If the characterization were deeper, the conflict between Pete and his young brother Jack, a militant worker, who fights for a mass demonstration and general strike, would be more poignant. The most dramatic scene in the play occurs when the strikers hold up the scabs and force them to sign the pledge before entering the factory. Here the interference of the union leader, wanting peace at any price, forces the men to let the scab in.

Whatever may be confusing in the play seems to be due to the fact that the characters are not defined—they are not fully developed as individuals nor are they typical enough to be universal examples. For instance, I am not sure whether Donahue, played by Norman Lloyd, is a typical A.F. of L. leader. He is represented as having given 35 years to the labor movement; he is poor and honest. Yet he sows hesitation and discord, his tactics of inertia break the strike. Is he a bureaucrat on the side of the bosses or is he merely a blunderer with outmoded ideas of strike leadership?

Despite these confusions, the play is moving because it is written in a straightforward sincere style devoid of theatric cliches. It has one new theatrical surprise, whose effectiveness would be lost in telling it here.

In place of the scheduled one-act play, two monologues were substituted—one by Roslyn Harvey and another by that amusing Bobby Lewis, lecturing on "Sex and Propaganda." In addition, Louis Bunin's puppets gave two playlets—"Pain-in-the Neck" and "Il Duce." In the latter skit, that nervous microphone, which trembled and finally collapsed under the strain of Mussolini's "tender" exhortations, brought down the house.

A speeding of the tempo will greatly increase the suspense of the play. Whatever slackness there was, may have been due to the fact that it was a first performance. Jane Kim as Mrs. Santley, the mother who comes to take her daughter off the picket line, keys her part to just the right rhythm. The Real Pete Broyler gave the part a most convincing conclusion.

CHARMION VON WIEGAND.

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Let It Happen No More

ROBERT FORSYTHE

EVERY cloud has a silver lining and that seems to have been what ruined *It Can't Happen Here* in Hollywood. With eighteen relatives dependent upon every screen executive, silver is one of the lesser elements. Combined with everything else was fear, but that is part of the same thing. If the owner of two second-run houses in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, complains to Mr. Louis B. Mayer that the Croatians are beginning to claim Wallace Beery as their national hero, there will necessarily be an end of Mr. Beery in pictures because no company in its right mind can afford to offend the Yugs. In brief, if the flood be not that of gold, it can flow along undisturbed. Better to lose $200,000 at the outset than suffer Mr. Joseph I. Breen to come onto you.

The protestations of Elder Will Hays that he had spoken no word which might be construed as complaint against Sinclair Lewis's book was discovered eventually to be the usual diplomatic fabrication, based upon literal fact and as truthful as most statements from the Hays office. Elder Hays had spoken no word but Mr. Sidney Howard, who prepared the screen treatment of the Lewis novel, was astute enough to smuggle through the Los Angeles border guard the report of his assistant, Mr. Breen, on the proposed film. It appears that Mr. Breen was almost verbose. How definitely Mr. Howard has jeopardized his future career in Hollywood is not clear, but it would have been more politic for him to have accepted the declaration of Mr. Mayer that the film was being shelved because it was costing too much. Since the budget was in the neighborhood of $650,000, which is less than the cost of the storm sequence in *Mutiny on the Bounty,* there must have been some uplifting of brows and suppressions of snorts along Sunset Boulevard when Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer allowed that explanation to come forth. Nothing more indicative of the lack of originality of the films has been revealed in years. A picture shelved for lack of money! Nothing remains now but to admit that a supervisor would be better qualified for his position if he had intelligence.

My indignation at the cowardice of Hollywood is mitigated by relief. Having visited the famous place and viewed its product over long years, I am not too eager to begin parading menacingly toward Culver City with the intent of making them do *It Can't Happen Here.* Mr. Howard denied during his work on the script that any hint had been given him that by a mere shift of emphasis the story might be made an anti-Communistic picture, but the rumors persist that the idea was not beyond the conception of the Hollywood shoguns. And it is known even by the uninitiated that the author is not present during the filming of the script. When one realizes that a great point of the recent organization of the directors was a demand for a sight of the finished script before they start shooting, one will get a notion of the importance of the writer, twice removed from the scene of battle. Mr. Lewis sold the book outright and has no legal veto over the treatment accorded it. Mr. Howard was hired to adapt the book and his power and responsibility end there. It might very well turn out as a prohibition tract aimed to halt the purchase of strong drinks after midnight. The title is ideal for it.

What will the picture be like if it is ever filmed? I can tell you exactly. It will be the most blatantly patriotic, nationalistic, hurray-for-the-red-white-and-blue and down-with-all-furriners thing you have ever laid your eyes on. It will be the greatest boost forAmerican fascism ever heard of. In *tone* the book is not that at all; but there are enough incidents to make a case of that kind. It would be no trick whatever for a capable director to screen a film which would be as textually accurate as a slide rule and as ethically dishonest as a supervisor's assistant. It will be a defense of American democracy against all outside ideas, against all progressive ideas of any sort. It will be so extraordinarily Bunker Hill that it will reek with fascism, our own private little brand, the brand we'll undoubtedly get if we allow them to put it over on us. Sinclair Lewis didn't mean it that way but Hollywood can do it and pride itself on being faithful to the original.

Gentlemen, we are well out of that mess, but there is a lesson to be learned from it. The lesson is simply that we haven't been using our heads about Hollywood. We've harrassed those poor addled folk with demands that they produce films which deal with modern problems and current topics. It is exactly comparable to taunting a porch climber for his cowardice in not using his gun. They really aren't bad people, those Hollywood tycoons. What they most pathetically want to do is make good commercial pictures. They don't want even to hear about an idea but we keep at them, we stupid intellectuals and radicals. We keep at them until they make one that practically tears our heads off. What in the name of sense could they do! With Hays, the Breens, the bankers, the complete capitalistic tieup, it's a miracle that a decent picture ever comes out of that bedlam.

In the future I'm giving a great deal of my time to the activities of The League for Innocuetude. I want films which are so innocu-

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ous that the industry will eventually descend into desuetude—hence the name. I want them to make pictures about Boy Meets Girl, Girl Meets Boy, Love, Love, Love until the world is nauseated. I want them to make The Trail of the Lonesome Pine so often that irate nations will send bombing planes over Beverly Hills at the first mention of we-uns and the mountings. If Charlie Chaplin, who is his own boss, wants to make films with a scoial consciousness, that's enough for me. The others have my support in making nothing which will fail to appeal to the audience which was enraptured by Sol M. Wurtzel's production of *Dante's Inferno*. Hollywood needs our assistance; not our criticims. With *It Can't Happen Here* as a rallying point, we may be able to keep them away from ideas entirely. If there are any fellow sympathizers in the industry, I ask of them that they plump for nothing which might please us, but that they give their full time to showing Mr. Thalberg and Mr. Zanuck that they are insane in jeopardizing an investment of that magnitude with anything which might offend *anybody*. It isn't that they can't make pictures like that; they're dying to make them. All we need do is stop nagging them.

There is one angle which has never been stressed sufficiently and I approach it with some trepidation. I refer to the circumstance that the production of films in this country is in the hands of Jews. The mere mention of the fact probably lays me open to the charge of prejudice but I can take that chance because what I have in mind is for their good. Whatever else may be true, it is eminently certain that the fascist elements in this country are not their friends. I don't ask Hollywood to make radical pictures but every time they make one which plays into the hands of the reactionaries, they are furnishing another bit of emery for the knife that will slit their throats. If they think they can mollify the fascists by their *Riff-raffs* and *Red Salutes*, they are greater fools than even their severest critics imagine. What they are doing is alienating their friends and putting themselves in the hands of a group which will gladly garrote them when the time comes. What they can do is to make nothing—and make it with such skill that the world will be entranced.

As for our own people, I ask only that they cease being so romantic. It's a hangover from the old days of the silent film when all forward-looking liberals talked of the art of the screen. Of course it can be an art; but not in its present hands; and never under the present social system. For every battle we win, we'll lose a hundred. *It Can't Happen Here* is the greatest thing that ever happened. I know all the dirtiness of it; I know who is most pleased that it is being shelved, but capital can be made out of failures. Instead of breaking our necks trying to smuggle a tiny liberal thought into a film, we should take the Hays office to our bosoms. Any radical or radical-sympathizer who has the slightest foothold in Hollywood should scream lustily for the assistance of Mr. Hays at the first appearance of an idea, any idea. Do you want to offend the Afghanistans? Do you want to get the full weight of the Seventh Day Adventists down on you? Can you afford to insult the Kurds and the Wheys? Think seriously, Mr. Hays. If the approval of Hitler and Mussolini means so much to your foreign trade, you may find that the presence of the People's Front in France, the Left coalition government in Spain and the Labor movement in this country can also have an effect upon it. If I were you, I'd lay off the idea. I'd act precisely as if I were Republican National Chairman Brother Hays; I'd lay off *all* ideas.

Between Ourselves

THE most successful NEW MASSES Forum event held so far was the March 1 symposium at Mecca Temple, with John L. Spivak, Representative Vito Marcantonio and William E. Browder as the speakers and "Mother" Ella Reeve Bloor as the chairman. Over 3,800 people jammed the auditorium. Fifteen minutes before the speeches began the box-office announced: "All tickets sold." Enormous enthusiasm greeted all of the speakers—and 632 short-term subscriptions to THE NEW MASSES were obtained.

The four original lithographs by Orozco which are reproduced in this issue are included in a current exhibition by Mexican artists at the A.C.A. Gallery (52 West 8th Street, N. Y.). Other exhibitors are Amero, Arenal, Berdecio, Gutierrez, Mendez, Romero, Pujol, Siqueiros, Tamayo, Zalce, Pena.

Next week we shall publish an article, sent to us from Palestine, which reveals startling facts of the conditions facing political prisoners under British rule: "Chain Gangs in Palestine."

A number of readers have written to us for "special rates" on the two issues which contained discussions of the problems facing physicians (February 25, March 3). Our business department will be glad to take care of any orders at the price of eight cents each. Just send us the names and addresses of doctors whom you think the articles would interest, enclose the necessary amount, and address the Circulation Department.

An analysis of propaganda methods will be the feature of an exhibition held by the Youth Division of the American Jewish Congress (Grand Street Boys Auditorium, 106 W. 55th St., N. Y.) beginning March 9. Included are over 10,000 specimens issued here in the last three years, the items referred to by John L. Spivak in his NEW MASSES articles, among them. A special department shows new evidence of the connection between the Nazi government and anti-Semitic forces in this country. Tickets (25 cents) are on sale at THE NEW MASSES.

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writes one reader. Frankly, we are running it just to get more subscriptions to THE NEW MASSES. Every magazine spends a certain amount of money for promotion. We decided that this contest would be a good way to stimulate subscriptions at this time. It gives our readers a chance to test their caption writing ingenuity, gives them a chance at winning one of the prizes and brings us a subscription with every contest entry (or, if he is a subscriber already, extends his subscription). It's easy and it's fun. We urge all our subscribers and other readers to enter the contest and induce their friends to do so. This is a powerful means of helping spread the influence of THE NEW MASSES. Every subscription we receive means a further blow against war and fascism!

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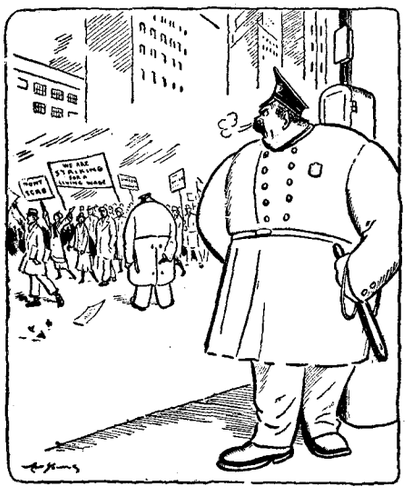

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3. You need not use the attached coupon, although it is most convenient, but in order to be eligible in the Title Contest, your subscription for 10 weeks for the New Masses with $1, the subscription price, must accompany the titles you submit.
4. In case of a tie of two or more, then the judges will ask for a competitive twenty-five-word descriptive essay on the three cartoons. Their decision on the essays will be final.
5. The title winners, by acceptance of the prizes, unconditionally transfer to the New Masses all rights to the winning titles.
6. The judges will award the prizes on the basis of the best set of titles submitted. Their decision will be final. No additional cartoons will be printed in the contest. All you need to enter is right here.

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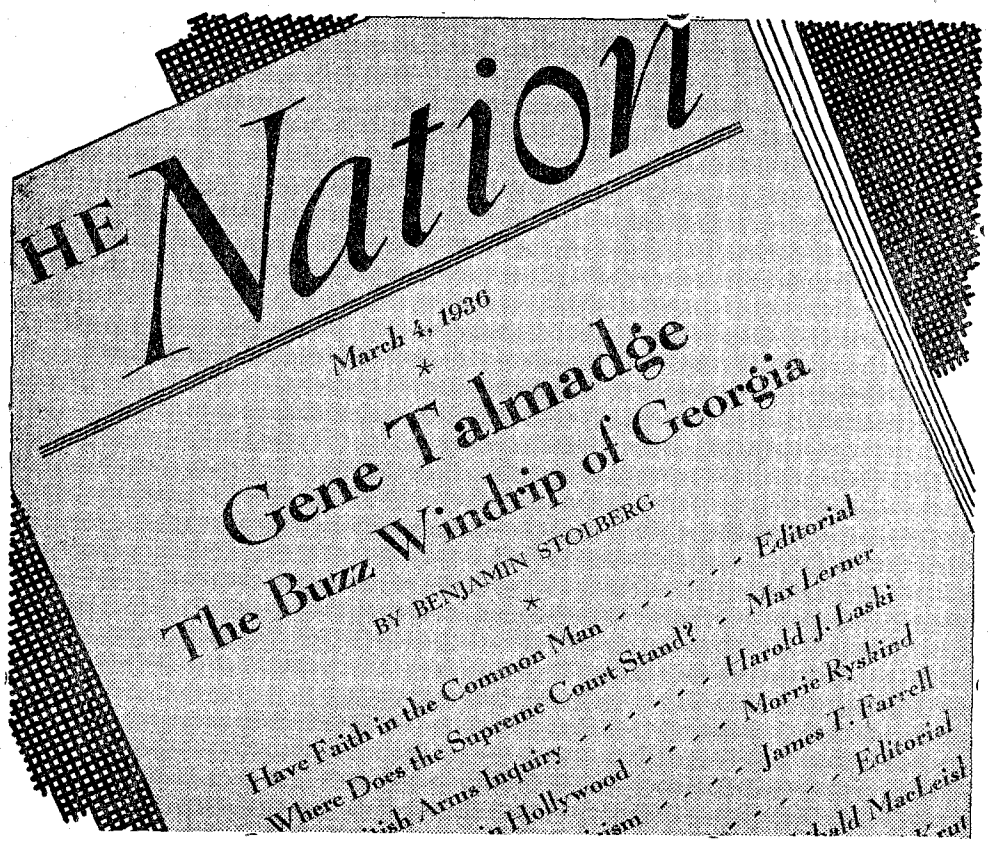
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March 4, 1936
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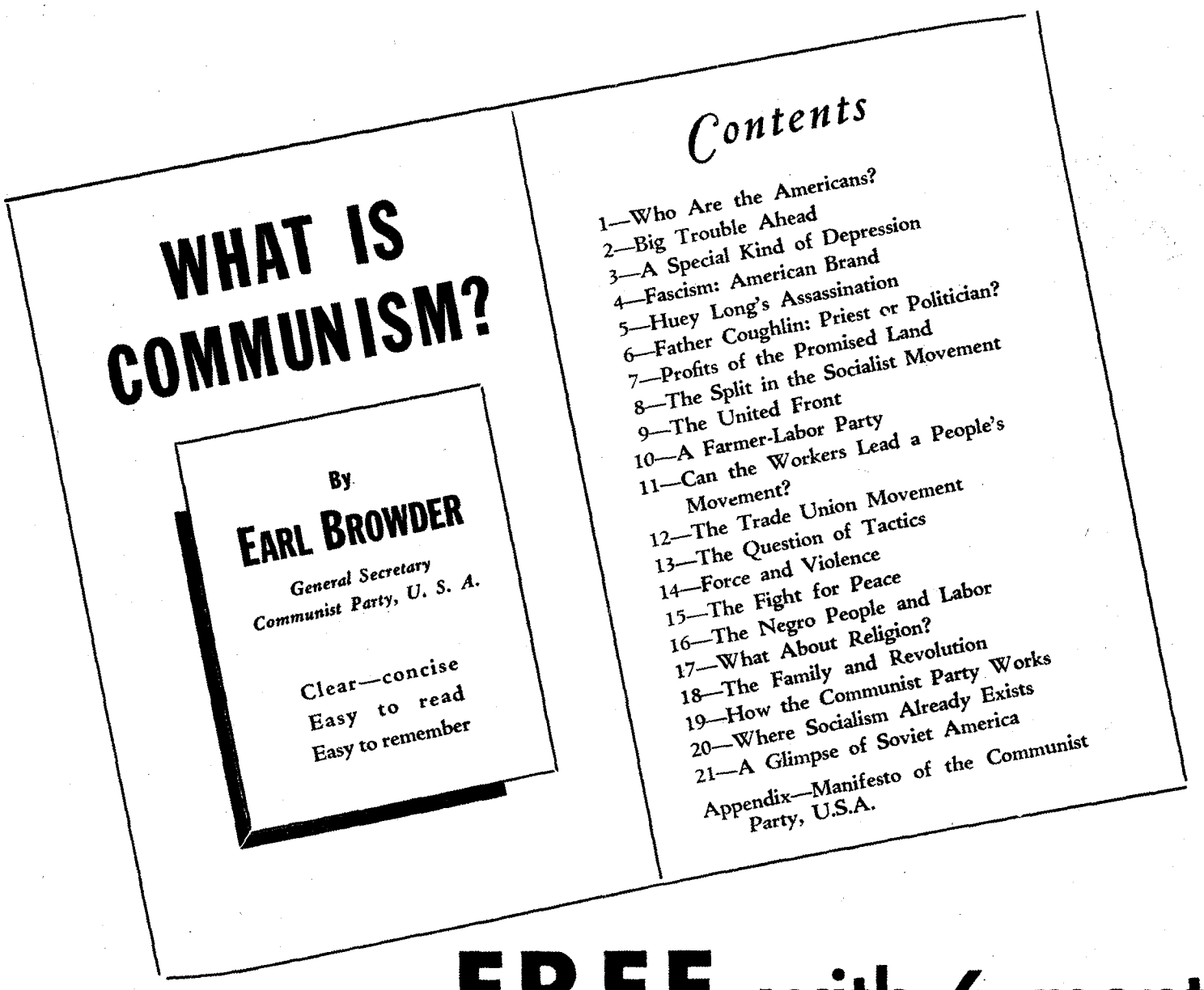

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